UNDER CÆSARS' SHADOW

HENRY FRANCIS COLBY, D.D.

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Caius Julius Cæsar = Aurelia

Julius Cæsar

Julia = Atius Balbus

Atia = Octavius

Scribonia = Octavian AUGUSTUS = Livia
1st wife
2d wife, divorced from T.Cl. Nero

Octavia = Mark Antony

Marcellus = Julia = Agrippa
1st Husband
2d Husband
TIBERIUS
3d Husband

Vipsania = TIBERIUS = Julia.
1st wife
2d wife

Drusus I = Antonia

Agrippina I = Germanicus.

Lavilla

Messalina = CLAUDIUS = Agrippina II
5th wife
6th wife

Caius CALIGULA

Agrippina II = Cnæus Domitius

Lucius Domitius NERO

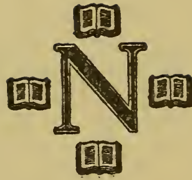
THE JULIAN FAMILY

Showing the relationship of the Five Emperors

AUGUSTUS,—the son of Julius Cæsar's niece,—was the first Emperor. He was succeeded by his stepson, TIBERIUS; Tiberius by his brother's grandson, CALIGULA; Caligula by his uncle, CLAUDIUS; and Claudius by his brother's grandson,—who was also his own stepson,—NERO.

Facing Half Title

UNDER CÆSARS' SHADOW



AUGUSTUS AS EMPEROR

Frontispiece

UNDER CÆSARS' SHADOW

BY

HENRY FRANCIS COLBY, D.D.

Illustrated

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PREFACE

Like ruler, like people! Kings and emperors are conspicuous specimens of the character of their times. They are centers around which revolve the prevailing tastes and passions of men. They also influence and control the minds of their subjects. If we would know the spirit of any period of history, we need only to fix our gaze upon the individuals in power at that time.

If we would ascertain, therefore, what sort of a world it was into which Jesus Christ came; how impossible it was that He should be its natural and merely human product; against what a dark background of selfishness and tyranny, immorality, and vice His heavenly purity and self-sacrificing love shone forth; what cynical materialism and infidel philosophy, what coarse stolidity and bitter malice He had to meet, and what hindrances and persecutions His cause, in the persons of His early followers, had to contend with, we cannot do better than to study the lives of the Roman emperors of the first century. This is the reason for presenting here some sketches of the careers of Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, and Nero, and for asking what relics can still be

found of their times and of their work. To contemplate some material object that they respectively touched or planned or builded,—some hoary ruin or crumbling fragment of temple, palace, aqueduct, or sepulcher,—seems to bring us into closer relation with them and to make more real to us those great dramatic figures, which would otherwise be but dim shadows of the past.

The illustrations in this volume are taken from photographs by Anderson, the unsurpassed photographer so well known in Rome.

H. F. C.

JULIUS CÆSAR

Facing page 11

UNDER CÆSARS' SHADOW

CHAPTER I

CÆSAR AUGUSTUS

We read in the second chapter of Luke's Gospel that "it came to pass in those days that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled." The common version of the New Testament says, "taxed." But the revised version, following more closely the original Greek, says, "enrolled." It was what we call at the present day a registration, made in order that none should escape the subsequent taxation.

The sacred narrative continues. "All went to enroll themselves, every one to his own city." Dr. James Stalker remarks:

> "This does not seem a very thrilling fact with which to begin the Christmas story; it seems, even, prosaic. But when the stern emperor's edict went forth there was one young woman's heart which thrilled with the keenest dread. That was the heart of Mary of Nazareth, called of God to be the mother of our Lord Jesus Christ. It meant for her a long hard journey of eighty miles, in the winter season, over the mountains and along the roughest paths; it meant that she must suffer pain and privation when she was frail in body and anxious in mind, and all because

she could not escape going to Bethlehem to be enrolled. For she and her husband Joseph were both direct descendants of Israel's best-beloved King, David, and must obey the law requiring people to go back to the city from which their family had first come and be enrolled and taxed there. So there was nothing for her but to set out on the difficult journey, this sweet and gentle maiden with her crown of supreme honor from God and her burden of human anxiety and pain."

We can imagine one subject of the conversation between her and Joseph on the way. Their poverty and obscurity had hidden from public notice the fact of their lineage, so direct from David. But all the Jews were wont to preserve with great care everything pertaining to their genealogies, and it was especially the case with those whose certainty of Davidic descent gave them ground for hoping that the Messiah would appear in their own line. We may believe that Joseph took with him a copy of the official family records, those that Matthew and Luke have preserved for us, and that he pleased himself and Mary along the toilsome way with the thought that now their specially honorable descent would have to be in some measure publicly recognized. Cæsar Augustus himself had not so good a patent of nobility as had they. Although the dark shadow of that monarch was about to fall, by reason of this decree for enrollment, across the very beginning of the holy Child's life, they were afterward to realize that God's providence had been leading them and had caused human government to become an involuntary agent for bringing about

the fulfillment of the prophecy that the Messiah should be born in Bethlehem.

Now who was this Cæsar Augustus, that is assumed to have had so great authority in the whole world that at his bidding a registration had to be taken in every part of it? He was no less than the first sole master of Rome's united empire, one of the most conspicuous figures in the history of the human race.

He had ascended the throne as the climax of a series of very startling and tragic events. Julius Cæsar,—that man so wonderful alike for military genius, political sagacity, and literary skill, to whom first the Roman Senate gave the imposing title of *Imperator,* and who, if he had lived longer, would probably have become all that this title later grew to mean,—had been assassinated by a group of conspirators at Rome in the year 44 before the beginning of the Christian era. These assassins claimed that they were doing a great service to the state by delivering it from the schemes of so ambitious a man; but none can deny that jealousy was among the motives that impelled them to commit the bloody deed, which took place in the building in the Campus Martius where the Senate that year convened, adjoining the Theater of Pompey, and we are told that it was at the feet of great Pompey's statue that Cæsar fell. Mark Antony, who had been his colleague in the consulship and in the control of the army, dramatically pronounced a funeral oration

after Cæsar's death from the *rostra* in the Forum and then endeavored to make himself the successor to Cæsar's remarkable power and popularity.

But just then a new and strong competitor for the military and political leadership appeared in the person of a young man only nineteen years of age, who is the subject of this sketch.

The name of this young man was at that time Caius Octavius. He was the son of a Roman noble of the same name and of his wife Atia,—who was a niece of Julius Cæsar. They lived in a modest home on the Palatine Hill. Caius Octavius was also Julius Cæsar's adopted son, and had been chiefly educated under his provision and direction. Moreover, Cæsar had designated him as his heir.

Caius Octavius proposed, therefore, now to become the great dictator's successor and avenger. He assumed the longer name, Caius Julius Cæsar Octavianus, and artfully secured,—first of all,—a pledge from a large part of the army to support and obey him. He found a great helper to his ambitions in the most distinguished statesman of that day, Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa. Marcus Tullius Cicero also welcomed Octavianus to Rome, especially as he saw in this young aspirant a rival to Mark Antony, whom Cicero intensely hated. Indeed, that famous orator made exciting speeches against Mark Antony, which greatly impaired the influence of that commander.

Soon there was civil war. Octavian, as we may

now call him, was on one side, Mark Antony on the other. In two battles the latter was defeated. He barely escaped with his life; and so Octavian now attained unto the superior authority, imposing his will upon the government and securing his proclamation as consul on the 22d of September, forty-three years before Christ.

Having reached this stage of success, Octavian began to plan the securing of the humiliation of Brutus and Cassius, who had taken part in the assassination of Julius Cæsar, and who, with their comrades, called themselves "liberators," in view of their opposition to the concentration of power in one man. To rid himself of annoyance by them, Octavian needed all the help he could get. He now, therefore, took a most amazing step and one that betrayed his utter lack (at that time) of moral principle. He changed his attitude toward Mark Antony, conciliated his friendship, and actually succeeded in forming an agreement with him and with another ambitious competitor named Lepidus, who had also been a prominent military officer.

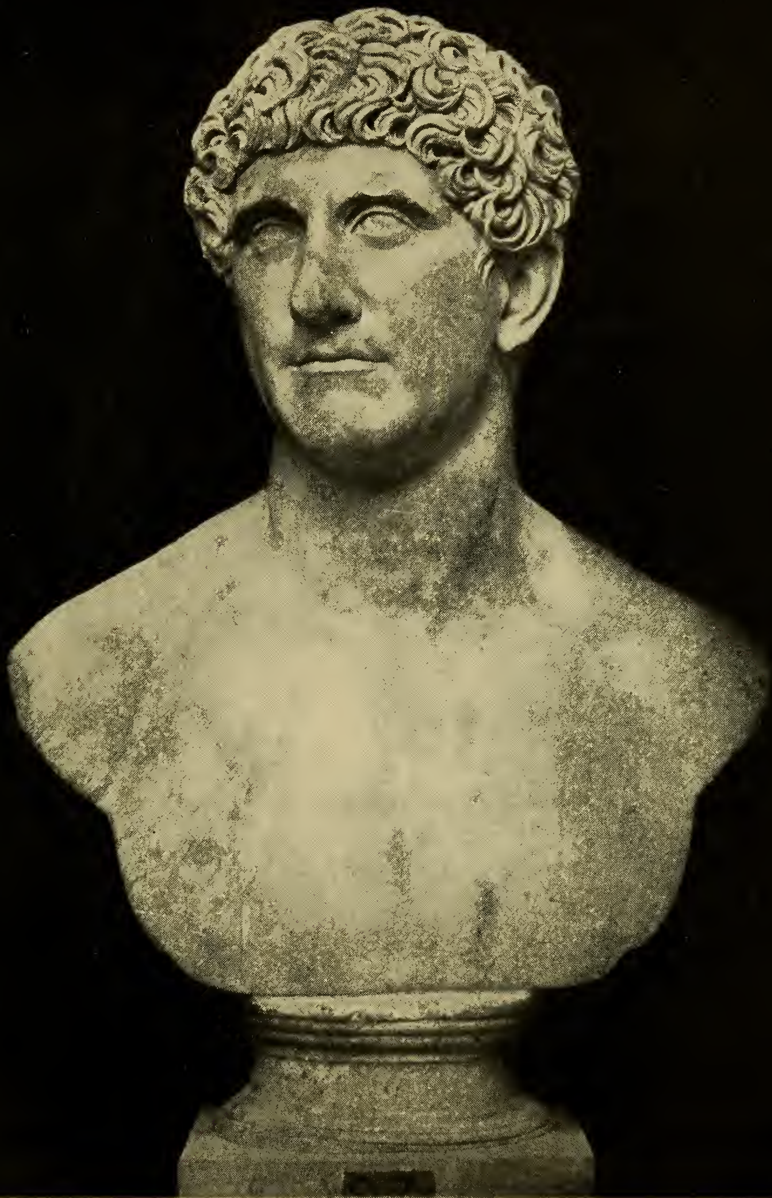
These three met together for three days on a small island in the river Rhenus, and there agreed to be a "triumvirate," as they called it, for the reconstitution of the commonwealth. This triumvirate, which was to last for five years, was a most high-handed conspiracy,—an insult to the dignity of the Roman senate, a violation of many previous professions and alliances, and a tyranny over the

rights of private citizens. Three hundred senators and two thousand knights were arbitrarily proscribed by the three usurpers of power. The estates of these victims were plundered and many of them were hunted to their deaths.

Each one of the triumvirate in this arrangement sacrificed some one of his friends to please the others. Thus, Octavian himself outraged all feelings of honor and justice by allowing Marcus Tullius Cicero, whose influence and advocacy had done great things in his behalf, to be put to death. This was a concession to Mark Antony,—or rather, to Mark Antony's wife Fulvia, who, it is said, had cherished a bitter grudge against Cicero and now triumphantly and dramatically thrust a needle into the once eloquent tongue of the murdered man, when his bleeding head was exposed to view in the Forum. It was a horrible satisfaction of cruel spite!

The combined forces of Octavian and Antony soon met those of Brutus and Cassius in the famous battle of Philippi in Macedonia, a city far away from Rome, but made more memorable later by the imprisonment and deliverance there of the Christian missionaries Paul and Silas. As the result of their humiliating defeat in that battle, both Brutus and Cassius committed suicide. This was in November, forty-two years before Christ.

Octavian returned to Italy to receive great honors at Rome, and Mark Antony remained to be the ostentatious ruler of the East. But the latter



MARK ANTONY

Facing page 16

soon became infatuated with the notorious Cleopatra, the queen of Egypt.

This woman played a large part in the case. She had come to Mark Antony at Tarsus in Cilicia to win him back from the wrath he had manifested because she had not sent aid to him and Octavian in their war against Brutus and Cassius. She made her appearance before him in the most sensational manner. In the summer of the year 41 B. C. she sailed up the river Cydnus in Asia Minor, on which the city of Tarsus, the capital of Cilicia, was situated. She was reclining upon a gilded couch, under a stately canopy, upon the deck of her galley, which was propelled by silver oars and purple sails. She was personating the goddess Venus, attended by the Graces and fanned by Cupids. Pipes and lutes discoursed delightful music and the air was perfumed with sweet odors. The Apostle Paul, when he was a youth at Tarsus, doubtless heard related this strange incident that had taken place in his native city two generations before his time. Mark Antony disgracefully became Cleopatra's complete slave and, carried away by her insidious allurements, he yielded to her capricious dictation in many atrocious acts of oppression and cruelty.

There followed a period of disagreement and bloody conflict between Octavian and Mark Antony. It was connected with the appropriation of private lands in Italy in order to reward Octavian's soldiers. The principal event in that

short civil war was the siege and capture of the strong hill-town of Perusia (the modern Perugia), where an old Roman gateway still bears the name of the Arch of Augustus. I strayed out of that gate, I remember, on my visit to Perugia and looked up at the massive stones that frowned upon the modern intruder. At the period of history of which we are speaking Mark Antony was still in the East, but his brother, Lucius Antonius, leading an army in his behalf, occupied this famous old hill-town. Octavian encamped around it, and finally subdued it by siege and famine. It was only saved from plunder by his soldiers, after his capture of it, because it was set on fire by one of its own citizens, although many of these were put to death by the relentless victor.

In order to offset the injury to his prospects caused by this defeat of his brother and to carry out plots which he had been making with his allies in Italy, Mark Antony crossed the Mediterranean sea from the East, invaded Italy, and expected to fight with Octavian. But these plans were frustrated, because his soldiers and those of Octavian, having fought together at Philippi, were not enthusiastic for any such engagement with each other. Negotiations followed. A new treaty was made at Brundusium on the Adriatic coast. A new division of the world was mapped out between the two leaders, and the treaty was supposed to be confirmed by a notable marriage that then took place. This was between Mark Antony,

whose wife Fulvia had died, and Octavia, the sister of Octavian. It was celebrated with great pomp and joy. Fond hopes were entertained on the occasion for an era of great peace and prosperity. The poet Virgil is thought to have celebrated this treaty of Brundusium in his famous Fourth Eclogue. In glowing language,—reminding us of the metaphors, if not of the spirit of Old Testament Messianic predictions,—he speaks of the birth of a predestined boy who should inaugurate a reign of peace and blessedness on earth. Exactly what boy he meant has been a subject of much discussion. Some Christians of the Middle Ages in their zeal claimed that he meant Jesus, the Christ; and, as he refers to the Sibyl of Cumæ as having foretold the happy period, her name, in a later age, was curiously coupled in the old Latin hymn "Dies Iræ" with that of the psalmist David as giving her prophetic testimony:

Teste David cum Sibylla.[1]

And so, Raphael and Michaelangelo both depicted her as a prophetess in their Christian frescoes, now to be seen in Rome. There were so many Jews in Rome in Virgil's time that he may have read the prophecy of Isaiah and may have caught something of his imagery; but it is not probable that in his lines he expresses anything more than an optimistic pagan's general hope of a glorious prince and a brighter day.

[1]As David and the Sibyl say.

After the festivities of his marriage with Octavia, Antony went back to his eastern domain, with larger projects and many promises. But it was not long before his profligate tastes again manifested themselves. Not even the thought of the noble character of his new wife, Octavia, could restrain him. He went on from one great folly to another. Although he came back once to southern Italy and renewed with Octavian, at Tarentum, the terms of "the triumvirate" for another five years, it was all in vain. The wily Cleopatra had again established her influence over him. Finally, at her instigation, he placed himself at the head of an oriental fleet and army and prepared to meet the forces of Octavian. The decisive battle between them was fought on the sea at Actium, northwest of Greece, on the 2d of September, B.C. 41. Antony was completely routed. He narrowly made his escape on the galley of Cleopatra, which opportunely appeared upon the scene for his rescue. Almost immediately, in the Egyptian city of Alexandria, both he and his infamous enchantress perished tragically by suicide.

Thus Octavian became the sole master of practically the whole world. Great success had been achieved by his army over the Parthians in the far East. Herod the Great, an Idumæan, was confirmed about this time in his authority as King of Judea.

Jerusalem had been captured by the Roman general Pompey, in 63 B.C., and Judea had then

become a part of the Roman province of Syria. The Roman control of it had, however, been intermitted until this time, when Herod entered it and reigned triumphantly. Several other important cities were also added to his domain. But it was only as a subject of Rome that he had this power. He was supported in his authority by the army of Octavian, and was expected to obey every beck and motion made to him by that emperor. His administration of the affairs of that country was vigorous and splendid, though it was characterized by revolting cruelties. It is interesting in this connection to remember how in early Old Testament days Esau had sold his birthright to Jacob, who henceforth supplanted him. There had often, since that day, been enmity between the children of Esau and the children of Jacob. Now, for a time, this prince from Edom, a descendant of Esau, sat upon the throne of Judea and reigned over the posterity of Jacob, albeit he was overshadowed and controlled, as we have seen, by Octavian—a mightier potentate than himself.

It was when Herod was king at Jerusalem in this way,—fawning upon the favor of Octavian and fearing to incur that monarch's displeasure, —that Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem.

The Messiah, whom prophets had foretold and whom the Jews were longing for, made His advent in the humblest way. The Prince of Peace came as a little child into a world of awful selfishness and cruelty and conflict. Herod must have

died not long after that event. The sufferings of his final illness are thought to have exasperated his anxiety and cruelty and perhaps were among the causes which led to his ordering the slaughter, as described by Matthew, of the few young male infants in the village of Bethlehem, the number not being large enough to make the Jewish historian Josephus record the incident alongside of Herod's other and more extensive iniquities. While that ruler alienated the affections of the Jews, yet he professed to be a Jew in religion and, with scrupulous care, rebuilt the temple at Jerusalem, which temple continued to stand during the ministry of Jesus and of the Apostles. After the death of Herod there was made among his sons a distribution of the provinces of Palestine by the emperor Octavian. It was because of fear of one of these sons, Archelaus, who ruled in Judea, that Joseph and Mary, returning with the young child from Egypt, did not go to Bethlehem, but turned aside and went to Nazareth in Galilee. Sextus, the son of Pompey, who had commanded a piratical fleet on the Mediterranean, intercepting ships bound from Alexandria to Italy, was conquered by the forces of Octavian and was slain. The reputed son of Julius Cæsar and Cleopatra, Cæsarion by name, was also put to death.

Octavian was now made *Imperator,* and Censor of the Empire for life. This does not mean that all of the forms of a republic were at once de-

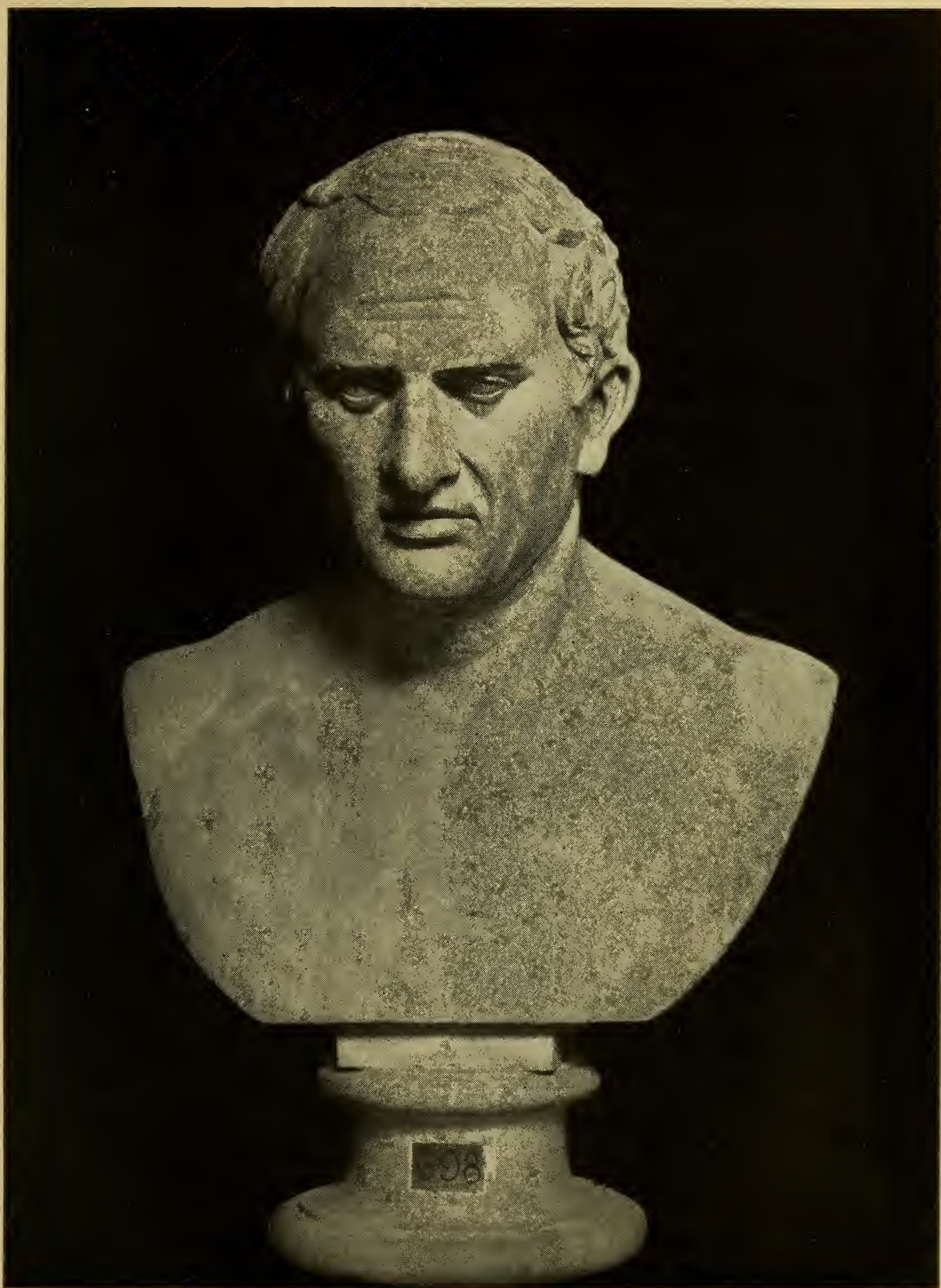
stroyed, but that the government was administered in the spirit of an absolute monarchy.

Octavian retained the family name of Cæsar, which was also assumed by his successors, as an official designation, even when they belonged to other lines of descent; just as are the modern titles of "Kaiser" in Germany and "Czar" in Russia, which are, indeed, derived from the Roman name.

Octavian was a man of great ambition and had overcome the violence and perfidy of others by often using their own methods. He was reserved in speech and bearing, and was somewhat simple in his manner of living. He had a large degree of coolness and self-control. He was shrewd, politic, and far-seeing in adapting means to his ends. He gathered all the lines of power into his hands almost before the people realized that he was doing it. We are told that he had under his direct management "the disposal of revenues, the movements of the army, the execution of the laws, the administration of internal reforms and the adjustment of foreign relations." First the senators then the plebians yielded to him many of their long-cherished rights. Under his management the famed Republic became an empire; and he was the emperor indeed. His dominions extended from the Atlantic to Arabia and from the islands of Britain to the sands of Africa.

While Rome had been conquering the world she had been losing her liberties at home. Nothing

had really been left of liberty except its name. But it must be admitted that, intense and stern as Octavian was in grasping after power, he showed wise moderation in its exercise. He reconciled the people to the loss of their freedom by securing to them greater material prosperity and many exciting amusements. He expended great sums on public roads and splendid buildings, sewers, reservoirs, bridges, quays, parks, gardens, and public offices in great profusion. Many of his associates followed his example and erected costly edifices, ornamented with columns and statues in marble and bronze. It was his boast that he had found Rome built of brick and would leave it made of marble. He patronized the arts and the sciences. He gathered around him men of brilliant talents,—statesmen, orators, philosophers, historians, painters, sculptors and poets. Vipsianus Agrippa, his prime minister, Mæcenas, Cicero, Livy, Virgil, Horace, and Ovid, besides many lesser lights, distinguished his reign and adorned his court. What the age of Pericles was to Greece and that of Elizabeth was to England the reign of this man was to the Roman empire. In religion he was not much more than a stoic philosopher, but he recognized the value of a religious faith among the people and so was glad to encourage them in the maintenance of pagan altars and temples, many of which he built. It is said that in the year 28 B.C. not less than eighty-two temples were rebuilt in Rome itself. He



CICERO

Facing page 24

erected and restored the temple of Apollo upon the Palatine, and near it he established a splendid library. The Senate decreed that he should have the then unique title of AUGUSTUS,—THE AUGUST ONE. It was a title that Octavian's successors tried to retain, but it has become his own special and superb designation in the pages of history, so that we now often forget that it was really only an adjective and not his proper name. The eighth month in the year was called August, in his honor, just as the seventh month had been called July, in honor of Julius Cæsar.

Augustus, as we must now call him, was the Cæsar for whom was named the city of Cæsarea, which Herod the Great built on the seacoast of Palestine, to be the political capital of that country, and which the book of the Acts has led us to associate later with the centurion Cornelius, in whose house the Apostle Peter preached. It was the home city of the Evangelist Philip and his four daughters (Acts xxi:8, 9) and the scene of Paul's great speeches before the Roman governors, Felix and his wife Drusilla, Festus, and King Agrippa II, and his sister, Bernice. (Acts xxiv:24; xxv:13.) Herod, as another act of obsequious flattery, also built a marble temple to Augustus at Paneas, at one of the sources of the Jordan, near the base of Mount Hermon, at the place that his son Herod Philip II, the tetrarch, afterward rebuilt and called,—from the emperor and himself,—Cæsarea Philippi, whither Jesus

Christ once came during his ministry, the most northern point he ever visited, and held one of the most significant conversations with his disciples.

My memory recalls with great pleasure the day when a little group of tourists in Palestine (one of which I had the privilege of being), there pitched after a weary day's journey their white tents, amid desolation and fragmentary ruins, and gazed upon the spring waters rushing, fresh and cold, from the venerated cave under the hill. Around this cave some architectural niches for statues are cut into the natural rock, but the statues have long since disappeared. Its original name of Paneas, derived from the rustic god Pan, is now corrupted into Baneas. A massive castle of the crusaders frowns down from a great height, but in the valley only wrecks of man's ambitious structures make a pathetic contrast with the beauties of nature. It was in that region, probably, on one of the foothills of Mount Hermon, that the Transfiguration took place.

If we turn to consider the family life of the Emperor Augustus, we learn that after one or two betrothals in his early youth, which engagements were not followed up, he married a lady of high rank named Scribonia, by whom he had one child, a daughter, named Julia. Afterward, when he was known as Octavian, and was one of the triumvirs, he either fell desperately in love with another man's wife or he was swayed by his intense

ambition at the time to ally himself with the aristocratic families of Rome. At any rate, he divorced Scribonia and carried off as his wife Livia Drusilla, who was the wife of a prominent citizen, Tiberius Claudius Nero. By him Livia had one son, who afterward became the Emperor Tiberius. She was soon to be the mother of another, the celebrated general Drusus. So far was Tiberius Claudius Nero from resisting her divorce from him to marry Augustus, that, it is said, he gave her a dowry and was present at the wedding. Some historians, indeed, think that it was in accordance with his own plans. He was old and infirm. His wife was only nineteen and he may have been glad to provide for her marriage, possibly, with the young and rising triumvir, and thus conciliate him to a better treatment of the aristocratic party.

However this may have been, it illustrates the loose Roman views of marriage in that day. It put Livia in a strange and trying position. Her own father had been among those aristocrats whom the triumvirs had proscribed and hunted. He had fought with Brutus and Cassius and had died by his own hand after being defeated with them by the army of Augustus at the battle of Philippi. Two years before this marriage Livia had fled from Italy with her husband, Tiberius Claudius Nero, to escape the vengeance of Octavian. Now she leaves the former to become the wife of the latter. She had to turn away for a

time from her own son Tiberius and, three months later, when her child Drusus was born in the home of Augustus, this second son was sent to the house of his father, Tiberius Claudius Nero.

Serene and practical, Livia seems to have accepted the fate assigned her and endured all the sacrifices it involved. A few years later, however, when Tiberius Claudius Nero died, he appointed Octavian,—who had then become the Emperor Augustus,—the guardian of his sons, and Livia received them back and cared for them with a mother's devoted solicitude. She seems truly to have won the admiration if not the affection of Augustus. He was proud of her ability, her faithfulness, her household thrift, her wise counsel in the affairs of state. They lived simply in their house upon the Palatine. It was devoid either of magnificent display or precious objects of art. The furniture was exhibited in the second century of our era and was wondered at for its plainness. She superintended personally the treatment of the wool, its distribution among the slaves, and its weaving for family use. Augustus never wore any togas that were otherwise made. Their several villas at Lanuvium, Palestrina, and Tivoli were all unpretentious. They sometimes entertained prominent people at dinner, but only on extraordinary occasions were there six courses served,—usually there being but three.

On one public occasion Augustus made a long speech in which he cited Livia as a model for

the ladies of Rome. He set forth minutely the details of her household management,—what she did, how she dressed, at what expense, how she amused herself, and what amusements she deemed suitable for a person of her position. The Romans regarded her as the perfect type of an aristocratic lady. She seems to have been dignified and handsome in person, and thoughtful in spirit. Her two sons,—Tiberius and Drusus, the stepsons of Augustus,—were also very popular. Notwithstanding the outrageous wrong of her compelled divorce from her former husband, many annoyances from her stepdaughter Julia, and the temptations of a royal court, she maintained a strong and self-controlled character, and, during a married life of fifty years, kept to the last the affection of her husband. It is reported that he said to her at last, as he lay upon his death-bed:

"Preserve the memory of a husband who has loved you very tenderly."

When asked at one time how she contrived to retain his affection, Dion Cassius tells us that she significantly replied:

"My secret is very simple: I have made it the study of my life to please him, and I have never manifested any indiscreet curiosity with regard to his public or private affairs."

In all the life of the imperial court, not only in the reign of Augustus but, as we shall see, in that of her son Tiberius, the able and tactful man-

agement of this commanding lady was an important factor.

But, aside from his regard for Livia and in spite of all his wealth and power and the flattery of his subjects, Augustus was far from happy. He had been bereaved by death of many of those whom he esteemed and loved, such as Drusus, Caius and Lucius Cæsar. He was often the victim of mortification, sorrow and moroseness. His daughter, Julia, disgraced him by her immoral conduct. There was always incompatibility between her and Livia. His grandsons died soon after. He did not take much delight in the thought of his stepson, Tiberius, as his successor, and the marriage of Julia to Tiberius did not improve the situation. But the jealousies and intrigues of his court made for him constant trouble.

In his last days he made a generous will, distributing thereby gifts to many of those who had served him, including huge donations to the soldiers, to the public treasury, and to the populace. He also compiled a list of achievements by which the empire had been benefited under his reign and for which he had received public honors. This memorial he intended to be cast in bronze for the doors of the great mausoleum that he had built in Rome for his burial place. We are indebted for its preservation, however, to the Galatians, who, inhabiting a province in the heart of Asia Minor, had erected during the life of Augustus a temple in his honor at their city of Ancyra, the

modern Angora. They obtained a copy of the memorial and inscribed it upon the walls of the vestibule of this temple; and there, though greatly marred and broken, it can be read even at the present day,—a fine record of the great monarch's deeds.

It was the propensity of Augustus to use the vast riches at his disposal for the benefit of the people. Sometimes he distributed freely corn, wine, and oil and sometimes allowances in money. He asserted that he spent in gifts what was equivalent to the sum of twenty-six millions of dollars (American money). To these many other donations must be added; so that it has been reckoned that his expenditure for the benefit of the people amounted to ninety-one millions of dollars. Says Lanciani:

> "Were we not in the presence of official statistics and of state documents, we should hardly feel inclined to believe these enormous statements."

Augustus died at Nola in Campania, Italy, August 19, A. D. 14, when he was nearly seventy-six years of age. Before he died he had a long conversation with his stepson Tiberius. On the day of his death, when some friends entered his room, he said to them:

"Do you think that I have acted my part well on the stage of life? If you are satisfied, give me your applause!"

Soon after, he expired in the arms of his wife Livia.

"His body," it is said, "was transported from village to village, from city to city, along the Appian Way by the members of each municipal council in turn. To avoid the heat, the procession marched only at night. At the foot of the Alban Hills the whole Roman knighthood had come out to meet the bearers. Thence, over the last ten miles of the road, the progress was like a triumphal one, till the bier was placed in the vestibule of the Palace on the Palatine Hill. Afterwards the body was carried to the Forum, to the space in front of the Temple of Julius Cæsar, where from the rostra a panegyric was read by Tiberius. Another oration was delivered at the opposite end of the Forum by Drusus, the adopted son of Tiberius. Thence the senators, the high priests, the knights, the army and a large part of the leading citizens continued the march by the Via Flaminia to the Ustrinum, or enclosure for cremation. Officers and men threw on the pyre the decorations which Augustus had awarded them for bravery, and the torch was applied by the captains of the legions which he had often led to victory."

Five days afterward Livia and the chief men of the Equestrian order gathered up his ashes and bore them to the Mausoleum.

During the lifetime of Augustus he had been venerated as a god in the provinces; now he was

actually worshiped in Rome itself. Adoration was paid to him in many private homes. He also had a cult, sanctuaries, and a priesthood assigned to him. Livia became the special priestess of the new divinity.

There have come down to us, in a remarkable state of preservation, many statues, medallions, busts, and coins, which have kept for us his face, his form, and his bearing. In the Hall of Busts in the Vatican Museum we have that beautiful head which was found at Ostia, at the mouth of the Tiber, in 1808.[2] It is admired by all, and is always spoken of as "the Young Augustus." It represents the future emperor with a prominent nose, an intellectual forehead, wavy hair, a rounded chin, and an expression both thoughtful and amiable. What was he thinking of when the sculptor caught his expression? Had he premonitions of the successes and responsibilities before him? Our knowledge of his subsequent career illuminates for us his marble features. They have an attractive ideality, which we can hardly associate with one who afterward became such a stern warrior; and we are drawn to him for the moment with tender sympathy and exalted hopes.

Without stopping to describe other figures of him, it is interesting to contrast this one with that splendid full-length marble statue, also in the Vatican, which was not discovered until 1863. It was found buried in the ruins of the villa of his wife,

[2] *See* Frontispiece.

Livia, seven miles from Rome. This also bears every mark of being a portrait from life. How impressive that it has been hidden in the earth for so many centuries, during which many kingdoms have risen and fallen; and now it has been brought forth, almost like a resurrection, and we can stand, as it were, face to face with him! It shows him to us in all his majesty, late in his career, when he had become the grand master of the world. He stands in a calm and commanding attitude, bearing his weight on his right foot, wearing his military breastplate, with drapery carefully arranged around his hips and thrown over his left arm. His left hand carries a scepter, while his right is extended as if he were deliberately addressing his army. The countenance bears the stamp of much experience and of deep seriousness, if not of anxiety. He seems to be oppressed by the weight of empire. On his breastplate or cuirass, which appears to be copied from the metallic original worn by him, are seen Greek designs, which have been compared with cameos for the beauty and delicacy of their detail. The central group of these embossed figures represents a Roman general receiving some military standards from a conquered foe. It is very probably commemorative of the victory won by the Roman army over the Parthians about 17 B.C., when Augustus had deputed his stepson Tiberius to carry on the campaign and afterward to secure in a formal manner from Phraates, the king of the

Parthians, those bronze eagles that the Parthians had taken away from the Roman general Crassus and his soldiers more than thirty years before. That defeat had been a bitter recollection to the Romans ever since it occurred, and the restoration of the standards was a matter of corresponding rejoicing. They were sent to Rome, where they were placed by Augustus in the Temple of Mars Ultor. It seems probable that this statue was carved soon after that time, about 17 B. C. On the two sides of the representation, bent over in sorrow, sit two symbolical figures, the probable genii of two conquered nations. Near the neck of the cuirass appears the god Cælus emerging from the clouds, holding a scarf blown by the wind and arching above his head, while before him Apollo riding in his chariot reminds us of the figures of Guido's famous fresco of Aurora on the ceiling of the Rospigliosi Casino in Rome.[3] No figure could better personify the conscious gravity of universal lordship than does this stately statue of Augustus. When first discovered some portions of it bore traces of coloring. A little cherub riding upon a dolphin is placed against the right foot, supporting the work and, by contrast, setting forth its dignity.

I have spoken of the great buildings erected in the time of Augustus. Notwithstanding the fact

[3] It seems at first thought that Guido must have gotten the suggestion for his group from these figures on the cuirass of Augustus. But how could he? During Guido's life this statue was unknown and lay buried in the ground.

that the medieval Romans made the ancient ruins of their city such a quarry for building material out of which to construct their palaces, some evidences of this emperor's noble edifices still exist. The Regia, or Royal House (of which now only a few traces are found), in the Forum, had been the residence of the rulers of the early Roman kingdom and afterward of the leaders of the Republic; but, as Augustus had been born upon the Palatine and as that historic hill afforded a much more spacious and commanding site, the people,—when they made Augustus Imperator twenty-eight years before Christ,—there erected for him a splendid palace. Foundations of this building, which are probably not yet fully excavated, are still to be seen.

The beautiful mosaic pavements and frescoed walls of some of the chambers of the house of Livia his wife can also be visited on the Palatine Hill. This is the only building of its kind in the midst of the ruined palaces of the emperors. Livia had received it from her first husband, the father of Tiberius, and to it she retired after the death of her second husband, Augustus. A flight of six steps descends to the marble floor, which is laid out in patterns. From this three chambers can be entered. The paintings upon the plastered walls of the dining-room and sitting-room are very artistic in design and coloring. They are among the most ancient paintings in existence. They represent mythological scenes and char-

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ALTAR OF PEACE

acters,—Mercury, Polyphemus, and Galatea, with fruits, flowers, masks, and sacrificial offerings. Some of the tints are still bright, and suggest a homelike warmth. The triclinium or dining-room is recognizable by an inscription.

Near the Tiber we have the five columns and other parts of the Portico of Octavia, which was erected by Augustus and dedicated to his sister Octavia. In the days of the republic, porticoes or open colonnaded buildings for public resorts had been almost a rarity; but Augustus introduced a fashion and taste for them. In less than twenty years the Campus Martius (now covered by modern Rome) is said to have been full of them. They added much to the architectural splendor of the city. The Portico of Octavia is said to have had three hundred columns, enclosing a court with temples to Jupiter and Juno.

The massive architecture of what is left of the Theatre of Marcellus, in the same region, reminds us of Octavia's son, to whose memory Augustus dedicated it. Twelve arches of the outer circular wall are now used as blacksmiths' and other shops. The lower story is partly sunk in the earth. Its columns are much battered. Its arches and capitals are also badly bruised. In the eleventh century it was used as a fortress. Afterward a palace was built on the mound of rubbish within it. The historian Niebuhr, when he was the Russian ambassador, occupied it as his home.

The temple of Mars Ultor (Avenger) is another

of the buildings of Augustus. Before the battle of Philippi, which was such an important turning-point in his career, he made a vow that should he be victorious he would build a temple to Mars the Avenger, because the assassination of his foster-father Julius Cæsar would be avenged by such a victory over Brutus and Cassius on that occasion. With the fulfillment of this vow he combined the construction of a new Forum, or public exchange, for Rome.

These noble edifices were sometimes in later centuries degraded to very commonplace uses. The Portico of Octavia, for example, was for many generations and until lately used as a fish market. The buildings mentioned were all large and costly constructions. As Augustus deposited in the Temple of Mars Ultor the rescued standards of Crassus, so for several generations victorious generals stored away their insignia in the same place. One of its features was a gallery of statues of the military heroes whose victories had enlarged the territory and glory of the empire. The costly pavement of the Forum now lies twenty feet below the present level of the ground. It requires an effort of the imagination to reconstruct the ancient scene from the old, soiled fragments. Yet it can be done by the student of all the surroundings; and future excavations will reveal much more. For a people among whom the army and war were so important, the Temple of Mars was a center of the greatest interest. Its

THE CRYPTOPORTICUS

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beauty is described as of the highest sort. Augustus says in his will that the Roman citizens who fought under his orders numbered five hundred thousand. At the time of his death one hundred and sixty thousand Roman citizens were still serving under the flag. The number of men-of-war captured, burnt or sunk is stated at six hundred.

But Augustus honored peace no less than war. He thrice took the census of Rome, showing an increase of the inhabitants from four millions sixty-three thousand to nearly five millions. In the inscriptions, already referred to as existing in the ruins of the temple of Angora in Asia Minor, he tells us that in the year 13 B. C. the Senate ordered an altar to be built in the Campus Martius to the divinity Pax Augusta (Augustan Peace), upon which magistrates, priests, and vestal virgins might offer a yearly sacrifice. In after ages this altar became covered with rubbish and above the rubbish was accumulated in time a cemetery belonging to the adjoining church of San Lorenzo in Lucina. But this cemetery, it is said, was ten feet below the present level of the city. In the latter part of the thirteenth century, over it and over the altar of Peace beneath it Cardinal Evesham built a palace, which has since passed through various hands. In the early part of the sixteenth century five carved panels of remarkable beauty were brought to light from this ground. Other pieces were found, but were carried to various places,—even to Paris, Vienna,

and England. It was not until about the beginning of the present century that it was proved that they belonged to the famous Augustan Altar of Peace. Excavations have since been made upon the original site, sixteen feet below the street level.

Vaulted passages have been constructed, so that it is possible to pass along two sides of the altar's foundation; and at the end of one of these passages, practically embedded in earth and rubbish, may be seen to-day a most beautifully carved panel showing a sacrificial procession. The altar stood upon a platform three and one-quarter feet high and measuring nineteen and a half by eleven and one-half feet. It was approached by steps on four sides. All this was placed in the midst of a sacred area thirty-eight feet by thirty-five feet, enclosed by marble walls elaborately carved in relief on both sides. Among the representations is a procession moving toward a sacrificial scene. The figures are characterized by great dignity and their drapery is arranged to produce a graceful effect. Augustus himself and many of the persons high in rank and power during his reign are grouped as if in conversation. It is evident that the whole structure was a most highly wrought and artistic composition, a fitting monument to him whose boast it was that he had secured unity and peace throughout his empire and had caused the gates of Janus, the god of war, to be closed for a long time. Professor James C. Egbert, of

Columbia University, in his description of this altar in the "Records of the Past" for 1906, to which I am indebted, thus described two of the panels, which are now in the Uffizzi Gallery at Florence:

In one of these there are two family groups both marked by the presence of husband and wife. The tall young man on the left is Drusus, who died B. C. 9, greatly mourned by the emperor and the people. He wears a military cloak, as he has left his command in Rhætia to attend the dedication of the altar. His wife, the beautiful Antonia, stands immediately before him and their conversation is interrupted by the warning gesture of the figure between, who calls for silence lest they mar the sanctity of the occasion. The child at their feet is either Germanicus or the later emperor, Claudius. The group to the right may be Tiberius and his wife Julia, whom he, much to his disgust, was compelled to marry after the death of her former husband, Upsanius Agrippa. The wife may be the sister of Antonia in the first group. Then the husband would be Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus, the grandfather of Nero. Vipsanius Agrippa played a very important part in bringing about the reign of peace and we should expect to find him among the members of the imperial group. The central figure in another panel has been recognized as Agrippa because of the distinction suggested by the repose of the countenance. Some see here a sadness of expression natural to one who has suffered much. He is preceded by a young man who bears on his shoulder the official ax, for Agrippa appears here as a high-priest. The boy grasping his toga is Lucius Cæsar, his son, and the beautiful woman on his left may be Julia, his wife, or Vipsania Agrippina, his daughter.

To this description we may add that such graceful and charming sculptures, with their portraits of leading personages, could not have been unveiled to the Roman public without awakening great admiration.

To the period of Augustus also belongs the foundation, at least, of the Pantheon. His prime

minister and son-in-law, Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa, erected a temple, twenty-seven years before Christ, at the north end of the warm baths, which he had established here in the Campus Martius. It was dedicated to several gods. It has often been repaired and probably altered and enlarged by restorations. The emperors Hadrian, Septimius Severus, and Caracalla all contributed to its preservation and development. In antiquity the portico was reached by five steps, which are now covered by the rising of the ground. Since A. D. 609 it has been consecrated as a Christian church. Notwithstanding this, in A. D. 663 Constans II, emperor at Constantinople, carried away to his city the gilt-bronze tiles of the roof.

Throughout the middle ages this temple was prized as the palladium and emblem of Rome. The main part of the building is circular in form, —the height and diameter of which are said to be equal, each being one hundred and forty-two feet,—and is composed of that concrete that the ancient Romans knew how to make so lasting. It is lighted by an uncovered aperture, thirty feet in diameter, in the center of the dome, rimmed by an elegant ancient cornice of bronze. The rich columns of different kinds of marble and the other decorations of the interior are most imposing, and correspond well with the stately Corinthian portico which forms the front of the edifice and under which once stood colossal bronze statues of Augustus and Agrippa.

The five front steps by which it was entered in ancient times, are now covered by the raising of the ground all around the building. The entrance is still closed by the ancient massive, bronze doors. In 1632 Pope Urban VIII, one of the Barberini family, took away the bronze columns and ceiling of the portico to make out of them the elaborate pillars which support the canopy of the high altar in St. Peter's, and also cannon for the Castle of St. Angelo. This occasioned the circulation of a popular epigram of Pasquin. "What the Barbarians did not do the Barberini did."

The Pantheon is the noblest and best preserved building of ancient Rome,—the only one, indeed, having both its walls and vaulting intact, and it is still closed by its ancient heavy bronze doors. Lord Byron's lines concerning it are well worth quoting because of the conciseness of his description.

> Simple, erect, severe, austere, sublime,
> Shrine of all saints and temple of all gods
> From Jove to Jesus, spared and blessed by time,
> Looking tranquillity, while falls or nods
> Arch, empire, each thing round thee, and man plods
> His way through thorns to ashes! Glorious dome,
> Shalt thou not last? Time's scythe and tyrants' rods
> Shiver upon thee, sanctuary and home
> Of art and piety, Pantheon, pride of Rome!

It is not strange that it was deemed the most fitting place for the burial of the great artist, Raphael, and for that of the King of United Italy, Victor Emmanuel.

Of the former event the poet Rogers says:

> When Raphael went,
> His heavenly face the mirror of his mind,
> His mind a temple for all lovely things
> To flock and to inhabit—when he went,
> Wrapp'd in his sable cloak, the cloak he wore,
> To sleep beneath the venerable dome,
> By those attended who in life had loved,
> Had worship'd, following in his steps to fame,
> 'Twas on an April day, when Nature smiles.
> All Rome was there.

Victor Emmanuel's tomb is always covered with wreaths, tributes by the living to his honor.

The remnants of the great mausoleum of Augustus,—in which not only he but many of his successors were interred,—are not now sought out by many except students of antiquities. The last of the emperors buried here was Nerva. Near the river Tiber, on what was then the Campus Martius or field of Mars, on a great platform of stone, now beneath the ground, rose the huge circular building of two stories, in which were the chambers for the dead. Augustus was buried in the central chamber, which was covered with a dome. From this radiated fourteen smaller ones, most of which can now be traced, though in a ruined condition. Above these was a pyramidal mound of earth in terraces planted with cypress trees and surmounted with a large statue of the emperor himself. The whole was surrounded by an attractive park.

For centuries the monument was well known to

the people. War, earthquake and neglect have now made its ruins one of the least conspicuous sights in Rome, but some will ever find in them a deep pathetic interest. After some searching I found the entrance to them not far from the Via Di Ripetta. Upon my application, the custodian, who was an old woman, admitted me from a sort of court, where I could look up at a part of the circular exterior and where there was a fountain at the side. An inscription tablet let into the wall informs the visitor (in Latin) that here is the western wall of the mausoleum of Augustus disclosed by the removal of buildings. What seemed to be electric wires, stretched down along the side of the building, suggested a curious connection between the beginning of the first century and the beginning of the twentieth. Within the structure I paced the corridors, gazed at the arched ceiling, and could see out through the large windows into the central space. In the twelfth century the central dome was thrown down by an earthquake. Afterward the center was used as an open-air arena and was occupied by a popular circus until a few years ago. At the time of my visit it was a storehouse for the great plaster models for the sculptures to be placed on the new monument that was building to the memory of King Victor Emmanuel. The Egyptian obelisks, forty-five feet high, which stood before the entrance in the first century, now are to be found, one of them in front of the Quirinal Palace,—which is the royal resi-

dence,—and the other one in the square by the great church of Santa Maria Maggiore. Thus, long ago rifled of its contents, the burial-place of the celebrated master of the ancient world has stood for centuries, broken and neglected.

Since the time I was there, however, a new interest in it has awakened and a change has been made. The circular interior has been cleared out, and furnished with platform and seats. It has become a place again of public entertainment and is known as The Augustean. Orchestral concerts of a high order are there performed. In the interlude of the music the visitor can ponder upon the march of the nineteen centuries which have passed away since the walls around him were erected.

Augustus had been upon the throne about twenty-four years when Jesus was born. That holy Child had come to share our lot and to reveal clearly to men the knowledge of the Heavenly Father at a time when all its political kingdoms had thus become consolidated by force or treaty under one name of power, when better conditions and roads were preparing for the diffusion of Christianity, and when men were beginning to dream that there might be such a thing as a common loyalty to one great sovereign. Was it too difficult a step as yet for their minds to take from the contemplation of a universal dominion to the doctrine of a universal brotherhood? The quiet and unobserved beginning of our Lord's spiritual and

gracious mission was thus put in striking contrast with the outward magnificence of the world's great conqueror, and the purely spiritual methods of the Gospel with the noisy forces of a ponderous army.

When Augustus died Jesus was about eighteen years old. In a time of such infrequent communication between distant places a quiet town in Galilee, like Nazareth, would have slight relations with any higher authority than Herod. Yet Jesus must have often seen in his boyhood Roman military standards and groups of soldiers. He must have gazed with eager interest and curiosity upon their strong armor and shining weapons and watched with wonder their well-ordered movements. Roman coins must have been familiar objects to him, with their medal and superscriptions of the reigning monarch. He must have often discussed with his companions the various pieces of news that came from time to time from the great metropolis of the Empire. The death of the emperor in Italy, and the succession of Tiberius to the throne, as these were announced by couriers throughout the realm, must have stirred in him many serious reflections and exalted aspirations, many thrilling purposes of righteous zeal and tender love for men. Along with his gradual increase of knowledge as to the wide extent of Cæsar's magnificent empire, there developed in his mind the sublime conception of the Kingdom of God, his prophetic vision of its

blessed sway, and his consciousness that he himself was to be the Messianic King.

Never will the thoughtful part of the world finish the study of that wonderful life, the childhood and the youth of which were among the things that came to pass in the days of Cæsar Augustus.

TIBERIUS

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CHAPTER II

TIBERIUS: THE CÆSAR OF CHRIST'S MINISTRY

AFTER Cæsar Augustus came Tiberius Cæsar. His father's name was Tiberius Claudius Nero. His mother was the famous Livia Drusilla. She was afterward taken away from her husband to become the wife of the Emperor Augustus, with whom, as we have already shown, she shared the honors and power of his distinguished career. Tiberius and his full brother Drusus,—younger than himself,—became, therefore, the stepsons of Augustus.

While still a youth Tiberius appeared in honor upon several occasions, and once he made a plea before the emperor in behalf of the King Archelaus and the Thessalians. Later he became also the son-in-law of Augustus, by his marriage to Julia, his stepsister. To accomplish this, and thus obey the command of Augustus, Tiberius separated from his first wife, Vipsania, with whom always, however, his heart remained. Suetonius tells us that one day afterward, when he accidentally met her, his eyes filled with tears and followed her as long as she was in sight. This

pathetic incident does much to increase our interest in him.

His brother Drusus, to whom he was much attached, died in the year 9 B. C. when he was in military service on the banks of the Rhine. Bringing back his body to Rome, Tiberius walked on foot before the funeral train all the long journey. Augustus gave to him also the honorable mission of going to receive from the Parthians the military standards that Crassus had lost in war with that people, but which they were now willing to restore.

Tiberius performed with energy every duty that Augustus assigned to him. He rapidly, therefore, received military promotion. For thirty years he was a prominent and skillful general and acquired much experience in public affairs. He was strict in military discipline and a good administrative officer. He was sent across the Rhine nine times on important missions. Many believed him to possess those stern, Roman qualities that would fit him for the highest position. His temper, however, was somewhat surly and, like many of his contemporaries, he seems to have had little reluctance to shed blood.

He was admitted to an important and special share of the government two years before the death of Augustus. He was thirty-five years old when he came to the throne. His accession was quietly brought about by the careful management

of his mother, Livia, by the support of the army, and by the acquiescence of the people.

The inheritor of a vast empire from his predecessor, Tiberius had at the outset much to do to keep its various parts in subordination. For some time he avoided foolish extravagance and insisted upon order and efficiency in the various departments. He defeated the plans of the enemies who had plotted against him, and showed much decision and firmness. He did not allow himself in the first years of his reign to come into conflict with the senators, and conciliated them in various ways. He was very obsequious, at the same time, to the wishes of his ambitious mother, Livia, who had always been watchful of his interests, and who was a great helper to his plans. The first nine years of his reign he was a conservative ruler. If he had died within that period he might have been rated by posterity as an industrious and patriotic monarch.

But even during that time he was unlike Augustus, in that he had none of those striking qualities that appeal to the sentiment and imagination of the people. He had no personal magnetism. He led in no great enterprises. He cared neither to provide nor to attend exciting gladiatorial shows. On the other hand, he was often gloomy and irritable, cynical in judgment, and fearful of the malice of his enemies. This tendency was afterward increased by disappointments in his domestic life. His marriage with Julia, the

daughter of Augustus, owing to her bad character, proved to be unfortunate and unhappy. He turned against her, and fifteen years of later experience in life could not soften his attitude toward her.

The victories, triumphs, and death of his nephew, Germanicus, the son of his brother Drusus, occurred during his reign. Germanicus was a great soldier, a man of interesting character, and a sort of popular idol. While the people were giving themselves up to mourning over his death, Tiberius told them that both they and he should find the best consolation in attending to their regular duties. This seemed to them to be a very cold treatment of the occasion and confirmed their suspicions that the emperor had been jealous of Germanicus. It lessened his hold upon the affections of the people, although, to please them, he caused the arrest of Cnæus Piso, who was suspected of having poisoned Germanicus, and who committed suicide before he was sentenced.

At the same time Tiberius was completing the concentration of power in his own hands and began to employ *delators*, or spies, that he might detect and punish the beginnings of all plots against himself. He was suspicious of his subjects at Rome. "I have a wolf by the ears," he said, referring to the great body of the people. This being his attitude of mind toward them, it is not strange that they lost for him their love and

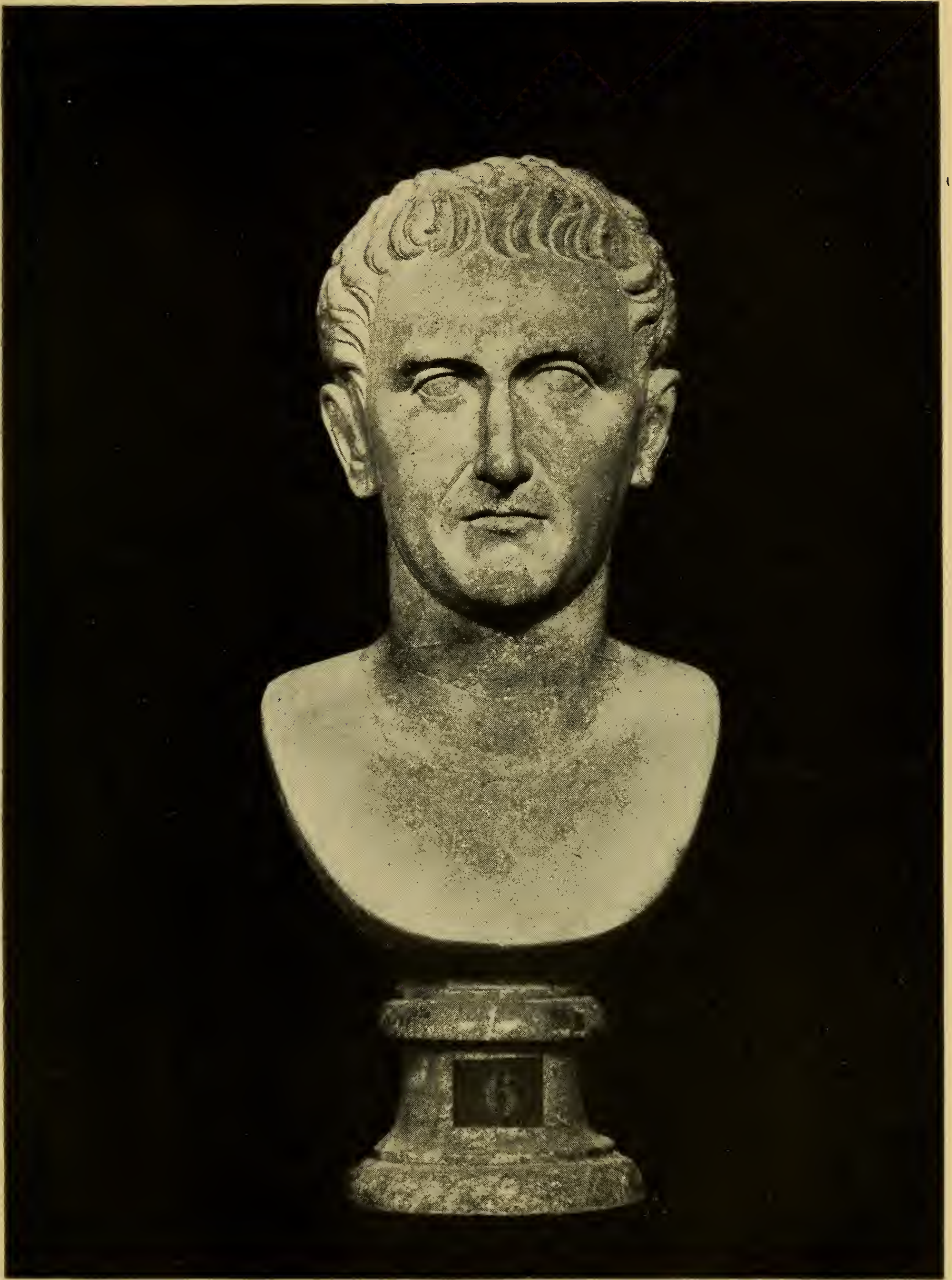
loyalty. His son, another Drusus, who had grown to be about thirty years old, was now associated as a consul of the empire with him.

The career of Tiberius rose to a certain height and then gradually declined. The turning-point was when he received into his intimate confidence an infamous adviser named Sejanus. He trusted this man more than he did the experienced officers of his realm. Sejanus was utterly selfish and corrupt, and willing to stop at no point in his domination of the emperor's mind. Tiberius began to manifest a depressed and morose spirit. He frequently retired to the island of Capri, near Naples, for relief and recuperation. There, upon the high cliffs, amid beautiful scenery and the soft breezes of a salubrious climate, he made for himself extensive gardens and villas and gathered around him servile flatterers, who ministered to his vanity and catered to his caprices. He was fascinated by oriental superstitions and employed many sorcerors and magicians. Juvenal pictures the scene of the emperor sitting on a rock of Capri with his "Chaldeans" (that is, soothsayers) around him.

Tiberius continued in a large measure to direct through others the affairs of the empire. His son, Drusus II, proved to be a man of ability and discharged well the duties that were laid upon him. But Sejanus was made prefect and had the control of the city and of the Pretorian guard. It was Sejanus who took the bold step of bringing

all the soldiers of that guard,—nine or ten thousand in number,—together into one camp, where they could be more at his own bidding. This camp was on the northeast border of Rome, where the square projection in the line of the walls still indicates its large proportions. Of course Drusus was in the way of Sejanus' unprincipled ambitions; so the latter insidiously managed to gain influence over the wife of Drusus; and these two, Sejanus and this woman, together poisoned the promising heir to the throne. Tiberius was deceitfully told that the prince Drusus had died from sickness only. It was a severe blow to his fondest hopes. He manifested great grief before the Senate and mournfully declared that he must now transfer his hopes to the youthful children of Germanicus.

Meanwhile jealousies and recriminations prevailed between Tiberius and his mother Livia as one party, and Agrippina, the widow of Germanicus and granddaughter of Augustus, as the other. Agrippina was living at Rome with her fatherless children, among whom was a third Drusus, a Nero, and a Caius. Caius, under the name of Caligula, was destined to be the next emperor. Sejanus fostered this quarrel for his own ends. He also encouraged the emperor in his deliberate purpose to make his permanent residence in the island of Capri, which Tiberius did soon after. There the luxurious seclusion of the emperor was guarded with the strictest vigilance; but day by



DRUSUS

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day a regular service of couriers brought dispatches to him from the continent and from Rome. His commands, in turn, were transmitted to the capital city.

Not long afterward Livia, the mother of the emperor and the widow of Augustus,—from whose somewhat officious oversight Tiberius had effected his escape by retiring to Capri,—died at the advanced age of eighty-six, having held for seventy years nearly as much influence as any other personage in the Roman court. She had been also called Julia Augusta, on account of her marriage to Augustus and her admission to the Cæsarian family. She had combined ambition with prudence, great ability with virtue and benevolence. At her obsequies Caius, the youngest of the sons of Germanicus, pronounced the eulogy.

In my sketch of the life of Augustus I have described some of the apartments of Livia's house, with their ancient beautiful frescoes, which are still to be seen among the ruins on the Palatine Hill. Not far from the beginning of the Appian Way the tourist, after nearly nineteen centuries, also visits, with curiosity and wonder, a columbarium, or great burial vault, so called from the niches in the walls resembling those of dovecotes, in which are believed to repose the ashes of Livia's numerous attendants, slaves and freedmen, said to be more than a thousand in number. This gives some idea of the opulence in which she lived.

It now remained for the unprincipled Sejanus to get rid of Agrippina,—the widow of Germanicus,—and her children, who caused him great uneasiness. By his exaggerated accusations, Tiberius was induced to send word to the Senate that they must arrest and condemn them. In spite of earnest opposition from the people, this was done. Agrippina was sent into exile in the island of Pandataria, now called Ventotienne, where she is said to have starved herself to death in the year A. D. 33,—the year of Christ's crucifixion. Her son Nero was sent into another island, called Pontia. Another son, Drusus, was thrown into prison at Rome. All of these afterwards came to miserable deaths as the result of their ill treatment. But another son, Caius by name, was fortunate enough to be looked on with more favor by the emperor and to be kept by his side at the imperial resort in the island of Capri.

Sejanus, seeming now to be in full power, was made consul by the emperor, to serve along with himself. But it was not a great while before the tide turned. Tiberius discovered the utter hollowness and treachery of this man, so that in a time when he least expected it Sejanus was summoned before the Senate at Rome, the charges of the emperor against him were read, and he was thrown into the Mamertine prison. Upon others also, besides Sejanus, the wrath of Tiberus fell.

Then, disappointed by those in whom he had trusted, and embittered by his own successes in

tyranny, he began to divert himself at Capri with debasing pleasures. He seemed to have thrown off all the restraint of decency and to have given himself up with his boon companions to the wildest orgies of dissipation and vice. His ancient biographers paint these scenes of his life in the darkest colors. He had broken all the fair promises of his earlier days and, instead of a painstaking ruler, had become a self-indulgent, besotted, and vindictive old man. The most charitable view that can be taken of his life at Capri is that his mind had become weakened by his gloomy suspicions, by his absolute authority and by his uncontrollable appetites.

Milton in his "Paradise Regained," when he represents Satan as tempting Christ with "all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them," represents the former as saying:

> "All nations now to Rome obedience pay;
> To Rome's great emperor, whose wide domain,
> In ample territory, wealth and power,
> Civility of manners, acts and arms
> And long renown, thou justly may'st prefer
> Before the Parthian. . . .
> This emperor hath no son and now is old,
> Old and lascivious and from Rome retired
> To Capreæ, an island small but strong
> On the Campanian shore, with purpose there
> His horrid lusts in private to enjoy,
> Committing to a wicked favorite
> All public cares, and yet of him suspicious,
> Hated of all and hating. With what ease,
> Endued with regal virtues as thou art,
> Appearing and beginning noble deeds,
> Might'st thou expel this monster from his throne,
> Now made a sty, and, in his place ascending,
> A victor people free from servile yoke!"

It was certainly a very subtle form of temptation to suggest to a noble mind, the thought of supplanting a monarch who had become so reprobate and vile.

The youth and early manhood of the famous writer and philosopher, Lucius Annæus Seneca, fell within the twenty-three years of the reign of Tiberius. He had been born seven years before the Christian era, at Cordova, in Spain. His father was a man of knightly rank; and his mother, Helvia, a Spanish lady, is praised by her son for the nobility and sweetness of her character. They were people of wealth, and had cultivated tastes.

When Seneca was still a babe only two years old the family migrated to Rome. He had two brothers,—Marcus Annæus Novatus and Lucius Annæus Mela. The latter was the father of Lucan, the poet of Rome's declining literature. The former is known in history as Julius Gallio, a name which he took when adopted by an orator of that name. It was the same Gallio who became deputy of Achaia in Greece and before whom the Apostle Paul was dragged at Corinth by the Jews, who were indignant at his success in preaching. When some Greeks seized Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment seat, Gallio "cared for none of those things." How little he dreamed that the one thing that would keep his name before the ages would be the fact that a Christian Jew, obscure at that

time, was brought for a few moments before his tribunal! But he was popular in his day for his culture and refinement and was called *dulcis Gallio,*—the sweet Gallio.

Seneca had the best educational advantages of his times. He studied rhetoric and philosophy. From Sotion, a Pythagorean, he imbibed the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, and from Attalus, the Stoic, a hatred of "vice, of error, and of the ills of life." He learned in theory to commend poverty, to despise luxury, and to declare that the mind should be superior to its surroundings. He was too far from Palestine to have been brought in contact with the ministry there of Christ and of his apostles, but it is striking to remember (and here we may quote the language of Dean Farrar) that "amid all the guilty and stormy scenes in which his earlier destiny was cast there lived and taught in Palestine the Son of God, the Saviour of the World." While the young Seneca was being guarded by his attendant slave through the crowded and dangerous streets of Rome on his way to school Saint Peter and Saint Andrew were fisher lads by the shore of Lake Gennesareth; while Seneca was ardently assimilating the doctrine of Attalus, Saint Paul with no less fervency of soul sat learning at the feet of the Rabbi Gamaliel in Jerusalem, and long before Seneca had made his way through paths dizzy and dubious to the zenith of

his fame, the Saviour of men, unknown to him, had been cruelly crucified.

Seneca's writings during the life of Tiberius were chiefly on subjects drawn from nature and on India and Egypt,—countries in which he had been traveling. He won a high reputation in literature. He had little to do with the imperial court. He was not brought into any personal relation with the emperor Tiberius, but not infrequently in his pages refers to that "brutal monster" and to the dangerous power of his prime minister, Sejanus. We shall hear more of Seneca farther on.

While a few men such as Seneca were beginning to reach after higher things, the reign of Tiberius was, on the whole, a period of dark skepticism, of degraded morals, of manifold intrigues. Thoughtful persons had lost faith in the old mythology, the conventional paganism. Many were longing for something better. Many had settled into the worst pessimism. Various dreadful tragedies went on in high life at Rome. There was a great deal of contention, and much confusion among all orders of citizens. Accusations and suspicions were everywhere rife.

Twice during his residence at Capri Tiberius determined to go back to Rome. Each time he started from that mountainous island to make the journey. He pursued it until he had come near the imperial city. Then, without entering Rome, he, in each case, took a meditative view of

its walls and buildings and turned back, terrified, it was reported, by some evil omen. The last time, as he was retracing his route through Campania, he was taken ill at Asturia. At Cerceii he presided at festive sports in the military camp, even casting with his own hand javelins at wild beasts, which were driven before his seat in the amphitheater.

But this was too much for his physical strength. Though he reached Misenum near Puteoli, he could go no farther. There he died in A. D. 37, when he was seventy-eight years old, at the close of a reign of twenty years. His funeral was soon after conducted with formal pomp by his successor, and his body was laid in the mausoleum of Augustus, at Rome.

Such was the emperor within the limits of whose administration fell the greater part of the youth and all the public ministry of Jesus Christ. It seemed as if in his person selfish power was allowed to run to every excess before divine mercy should make its great manifestation and self-sacrifice for mankind.

We read in Luke's third chapter that it was in the fifteenth year of this Tiberius Cæsar that John the Baptist began to preach in all the country about Judea. As Jesus was "about thirty years old" when he came to John to be baptized, we suppose Luke's reckoning to be made from the time that Tiberius became associated with Augustus in the government. In that dark age

there were many who were defying God and going to every extreme of injustice and vice, but there were others who were "waiting humbly and prayerfully for the consolation of Israel." How startling to the former and how welcome to the latter must have been the great forerunner's cry echoing in the wilderness of Judea: "Prepare ye the way of the Lord and make his paths straight!" Among the people who went out to hear John were some of the soldiers of Tiberius, who were then stationed in Palestine.

"What shall we do?" they asked.

"Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely, and be content with your wages," was his reply.

Herod Antipas, the son of Herod the Great, had been the tetrarch or ruler of Galilee under the Roman emperor since the death of his father. In his courageous zeal, John the Baptist did not hesitate to rebuke even this Herod Antipas, because he was then scandalously living with Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip. John, therefore, was hated and thrown into prison, and there remained until he was cruelly beheaded at the request of Herodias, through her daughter, who had pleased this Herod by her dancing in the revels of his birthday feast.

When Jesus had begun his ministry in Galilee, Herod hearing about him, said:

"John have I beheaded, but who is this of whom

I hear such things? It is John the Baptist who has risen from the dead.''

And he desired to see Jesus.

On another occasion some Pharisees came to Jesus saying:

''Get thee out and depart hence, for Herod will kill thee.''

And he said unto them:

''Go ye and tell that fox, Behold I cast out devils and do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.''

Herod's desire to see Jesus was afterward gratified in very remarkable circumstances. He was temporarily in Jerusalem, having come south from his city Tiberias, on the Sea of Galilee, when Jesus was brought before Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea. Hearing that Jesus was from Galilee, Pilate tried to turn the case away and put the responsibility of deciding it upon Herod by sending Jesus to him for examination. But Jesus would not answer Herod's interrogations; and so, after ill-treatment by Herod's guards, he was sent back to Pilate, who had to make the decision after all. He passed judgment in spite of his hypocritical washing of his hands in the presence of the mob.

We learn from secular history that one cause of the unpopularity of Pilate with the people was that, in removing some Roman troops from Cesarea to Jerusalem, he had tried to bring into the holy city the military standards that bore the

image of the emperor Tiberius. The old religious feelings of the Jews against any representation of the human figure, especially when, as in this case, it tended to idolatry, was roused to the utmost; and their remonstrance had to be heeded. So stirring were the events in Jerusalem taking place while Tiberius was emperor at Rome.

It was the face of Tiberius, or of his predecessor Augustus, that was on the Roman "penny" or *denarius* that Jesus once asked to be shown to him. Seeking a pretext for accusing him before the Roman authorities, his foes had inquired of him:

"Is it lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar or not?"

Looking at the *denarius*, Jesus said:

"Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's and unto God the things that are God's!"

The government of Tiberius had, indeed, a claim upon the tribute of its citizens, who enjoyed its protection and used its coin: but that claim should never interfere with their obligations to the Supreme Ruler of all consciences.

Again, when the Jewish rabble tried to overcome the scruples of Pilate by shouting:

"If thou let this man go thou art not Cæsar's friend," it was to the fear of Tiberius in Pilate's heart that they appealed. Centurions, or captains of a hundred men in the army of Tiberius, appear in the scenes of the New Testament. It was the shadow of Tiberius over the land that was withholding from the Jews the right to

put any man to death. They had to look to the Roman authorities to do this; and then it was accomplished not by the Jewish method of stoning but by the Roman method of crucifixion.

Those were Roman soldiers, "the whole band of them," at Jerusalem, who so heartlessly derided Jesus in the Governor's hall. We read that "they stripped him and put on him a scarlet robe." And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head and a reed in his right hand. And they bowed the knee before him and mocked him, saying:

"Hail, King of the Jews!"

And they spit upon him and took the reed and smote him on the head. And after they had mocked him they took the robe off from him and put his own raiment on him and led him away to Golgotha. Those were Roman soldiers that drove the nails into his hands and feet.

"They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall."

They elevated him upon the cross, and then sat down to gamble for his raiment, while they cast occasionally a glance at his dying agonies. It was the Roman centurion, commanding these soldiers, who, seeing the earthquake and those things which were done, feared greatly, saying:

"Truly, this was the Son of God!"

Afterward it was a Roman soldier that thrust a spear into the side of the crucified, to make sure that he was dead, and it was a group of them that

were placed as a watch at the sealed tomb. One wonders if the miraculous facts about the life and death and resurrection of Jesus were ever fully reported to the emperor Tiberius and whether he ever gave any consideration to their deep significance.

Tiberius was not a great builder as Augustus had been. Yet he built or enlarged the imperial palace on the Palatine. It was on the north corner of the hill and overlooked the Forum. Some ruins of it remain, as well as some of the villas that he erected on the island of Capri. There are said to have been ten of the latter. Statues and other relics of them now adorn the grounds and halls of modern summer resorts near the spots which he selected. A triumphal arch was erected in his honor in the Roman Forum. After him also was named the city of Tiberias, mentioned in John vi, 23, which was built by the tetrarch, Herod Antipas, to be the Roman capital of Galilee, and which was adorned with a palace and a stadium. On the edge of that Palestinian lake, which is sometimes called in Scripture the Lake of Gennesareth, sometimes the Sea of Galilee and sometimes, from this city, the Sea of Tiberias, the traveler finds to-day its modern representative, broken and picturesque.

It was to me a memorable night when, many years ago, I encamped, with some friends, among its ruins and watched the storm, which, as often in the days of Christ, had come up suddenly and

was raging on the waters. The fishermen, Simon and Andrew and James and John, as they plied their craft of old, could see across the waves the walls of the palace by day and its gleaming lights by night. And not far away in the city of Capernaum, on the shore of the same lake, Matthew, when he was an unpopular publican or tax-gatherer, sat at the seat of the customs and took in the tribute money, which was for the treasury and government of Tiberius at Rome.

It is not more than fifteen miles away over the hills to Nazareth, where Jesus was brought up; and we may well suppose that the wonderful boy sometimes came from there and looked down from the precipitous cliff into that deep natural basin where the lake lies and upon this city of Tiberias upon its bank. The shores were then inhabited by a great and busy population. About twelve miles long and six miles broad, it was then dotted by many a sail. Caravan roads connected its cities, and many races and languages were then represented there. Any youth from a rural home would take rich delight in coming thither and so getting into touch with the great outside world. And it was the scene of so much of his holy manhood's ministry that it seems almost a desecration that the name of Tiberias should also have been fastened there. It has now little more to attract the eye than the circling banks, the rippling waters and the blue haze on the surrounding hills. Yet to the Christian student,

acquainted with its past and in love with the character of Him who lived and taught there, it has taken on an interest that belongs to no other locality on earth.

> "O Galilee! Bright Galilee!
> Hallowed thoughts we turn to thee.
> Woven through thy history
> Gleams the charming mystery
> Of the life of One who came,
> Bearing grief, reproach and shame,
> Saviour of the world to be,
> God with us by Galilee!"

It is thought to have been in the reign of Tiberius that the two granite obelisks, known as Cleopatra's Needles, which in the nineteenth century before Christ had been set up by Thothmes III, a monarch of Egypt, before the Temple of the Sun at Heliopolis, were removed to Alexandria and placed in front of a temple dedicated to Cæsar. In our own time they have been carried very much further from their original location. One of them stands on the Victoria Embankment in London. The other is in Central Park, New York. The latter is 68½ feet high and nearly 8 feet wide on each side of the base. Who knows but that Joseph and Mary on their flight with the sacred child into Egypt from Bethlehem looked with wonder on its curious hieroglyphics at Heliopolis? At any rate, as it stands now in the park of an American city, it is a venerable and heavy link between the life of to-day and far distant ages.

Tiberius sits in the Vatican Museum. That is to say, his marble effigy does. It was discovered in modern times at Veii in Italy and has been pronounced by antiquarian experts to be a genuine representation of him. He appears as a young man of fine figure and handsome face. With his right hand he holds up a baton, with his left he grasps a sheathed dagger between his knees; and this seems to be a fitting emblem,—though not perhaps intentional,—of his cruelty. Drapery is thrown over his shoulder and across his lap. On his head he wears a wreath. The ribbons that fasten it hang down behind his neck. His forehead is intellectual. The hair is cut straight across it. The face is smoothly shaven. The lips are thin. The other features are of generous size. Some may discern in the figure the promise of a strength and wisdom, which, also, was not fulfilled. Others may see in the face only weakness and a consciousness of posing. At any rate, the statue helps us to make history real to the imagination.

Why was this wicked man elevated to such honor and power? The thought comes to us that we have no such ancient portrait of the meek and lowly Saviour, who, while Tiberius was reigning, "went about doing good" and inviting the weary and heavy-laden to come to himself for rest. No sculptor from among Rome's eminent artists was, of course, ever commissioned with promise of rich

reward to perpetuate in bronze or marble the form and features of the despised Nazarene.

This is one of the many facts that remind us that the highest worth has often to wait long for its appreciation. But that appreciation will come at last. A few may turn aside from the busy streets of Rome to contemplate in the Vatican gallery this cold semblance of the unworthy man who petulantly ruled the world when the cruel cross was erected outside the walls of Jerusalem and when the yearning arms of Love Incarnate were stretched out in pain upon it. But the Victim on that cross has gloriously triumphed and has won His throne in millions of human hearts.

CALIGULA

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CHAPTER III

CALIGULA, THE MADCAP

The third Roman emperor was Caligula. His real name was Caius. He was a son of Germanicus and Agrippina first, and a grandson of Drusus, who was a brother of the Emperor Tiberius. On his mother's side he was a great-grandson of Augustus. Tiberius seems to have preferred him for his successor to Tiberius Gemellus, his own grandson.

Caius was brought up chiefly in the royal court and was, as we have seen, in company with Tiberius in much of the luxurious dissipation of that monarch's later days in the island of Capri. Pampered and flattered, it is not strange that he grew up conceited and arbitrary,—a spoiled child.

It is said that when Caligula was a young boy he was dressed in miniature military accouterments, including the boots, and presented to the soldiers of the prætorian guard. This greatly pleased them, and drew from them the nickname of Caligula, which means "little boot." A bronze statue, found at Pompeii, represents him at about that time in his life, with his hair in long curls, orna-

ments of silver upon his cuirass, and his feet shod as indicated. As a youth he seemed to have had a weak constitution. He was very excitable and a poor sleeper.

When he came to the throne he was for a short time diligent and thoughtful. He sailed to the island where his mother Agrippina I had perished and brought back her ashes to Rome for burial in the mausoleum of Augustus. A cippus, or monumental stone, set up among others in the city and erected probably by him, because mention is made on it of his accession to the throne, was hollowed out in the Middle Ages so as to be a standard measure for three hundred pounds of grain and as such was set up to be used by the public in the portico of the City Hall. It is now in the court of the Palace of the Conservatori on the Capitoline. Caligula introduced some measures of wise statesmanship. Then he gained for himself great popularity by his fondness for public sports and his lavish expenditures on great gladiatorial shows, in which Tiberius had taken very little interest. There seems to have been a great deal of enterprise and dash about him.

But Caligula soon abandoned the spirit of discretion and modesty. He showed no true interest for his subjects. Very few of them, however, knew of his unworthy tastes and conduct at Capri. He had been greatly influenced for evil by the companionship at court of Herod Agrippa, a grandson of Herod the Great, who had taken the name of

Agrippa in compliment to Vipsanius Agrippa, the prime minister of Augustus. We shall later learn more of this Herod Agrippa I, for under the title of Herod the King it is he who appears in the twelfth chapter of the Acts. Agrippa had filled Caligula's mind with oriental ideas of what a monarch should be, namely, one who should make the people feel his absolute power and should dazzle them at times with great parades and startling spectacles. Accordingly, Caligula is reported to have said, "Let them hate me, if only they fear me." It became very soon evident that Caligula's vanity, arrogance, and cruelty would stop at no limits. He obliged Tiberius Gemellus, his rival for the throne, to commit suicide. He forced a similar fate upon other friends of Tiberius. His morals were execrable. His defiance of public opinion was shameless. He lived with his own sister Drusilla in a disgraceful manner and, when she died, decreed that she should be worshiped as a goddess. He successively took three wives from other men.

He distributed crowns to foreign princes. Among these was his friend Herod Agrippa, whom he allowed to repair to his tetrachy in Palestine, going by the way of Alexandria. In that city Herod Agrippa's presence was made the occasion of an insult to the Jews by the people of Alexandria. Their governor, Avilius Flaccus, knowing the repugnance of the Jews to all graven images, instigated the Alexandrians to demand that

statues of the emperor be set up in the synagogues. This pleased the intolerable arrogance of Caligula. Augustus and Tiberius had allowed themselves to be spoken of as divine in the provinces, but they had forbidden the worship of their pretended divinity at Rome during their lives. A deputation of Jews went to Rome to dissuade the emperor Caligula from sanctioning any such idolatries in regard to himself. They said they had prayed for him and had offered sacrifices for him, but they feared Jehovah as the only God. They were shocked by his blasphemy and returned disheartened when he replied:

"Yes; you have offered sacrifices *for* me, but not *to* me."

He, thereupon, issued his order that a statue of himself should be prepared to be worshiped even in the temple at Jerusalem. He went so far as to arrange for priests and sacrifices in his honor. The governor of Syria told the workmen to proceed slowly upon this statue; so that it was not completed before Caius's death.

Caligula seems really to have persuaded himself that he was a god, not one of moral purity, but, according to his own depraved idea, a god of outward and sensuous power,—a Bacchus or a Hercules. He caused himself to be adored in the Forum. He showed himself to the people, sitting between the statues of Castor and Pollux in their temple.

"If you do not kill me I will kill you," he cried

out to Jupiter in a thunderstorm, and then he ridiculously invented a machine for imitating thunder. He built some kind of a lofty passageway, which was called a bridge, over the roofs of the houses from the Palatine to the Capitoline, so that he could go over and confer, as he said, with Jupiter in his temple. Merivale says that "to stand on the summit of a high basilica and scatter money to the populace seemed to him an act of divine munificence and to sail along the Campanian coast in enormous galleys equipped with porticos, baths and banquet halls interspersed with gardens and orchards delighted him as a gorgeous parade and as a defiance to the elements." He also constructed at great expense a bridge of boats across the bay from Baiæ to Puteoli. This he did as a token of his power to win a victory even over the god Neptune himself. It was about two miles long. We may here quote again from Merivale:

"He ransacked, we are told, the havens far and near to collect every vessel he could lay hands on till commerce was straitened in every quarter and Italy itself threatened with famine. These vessels he yoked together side by side in a double line extending from one shore to the other. On this broad and well-compacted base he placed an enormous platform of timber; this again he covered with earth and paved it after the manner of a military highroad with stones hewn and laid in cement. He determined to enact on it a peculiar pageant, the novelty and brilliancy of which should transcend every recorded phantasy of Kings or Emperors. From Puteoli to Baiæ the semicircle of the bay was crowded with admiring multitudes; the loungers of the baths and porticos sallied forth from their cool retreats; the promenaders of the Lucrine beach checked their palanquins and chariots and hushed the strains of their delicious symphonies; the terraces of

the gorgeous villas, which lined the coasts and breasted the fresh and sparkling ripples, glittered with streamers of a thousand colors and with the bright array of senators and matrons drowning the terrors of a popular uprising which day and night beset them, in shrieks of childish joy and acclamation. The clang of martial music echoed from shore to shore. From Bauli the emperor descended upon the bridge, having first sacrificed to the gods, and chiefly to Neptune and Envy, arrayed in a coat of mail adorned with precious gems which had been worn by Alexander the Great, with his sword by his side, his shield on his arm, and crowned with a chaplet of oak leaves. On horseback, followed by a dense column of soldiers, he traversed the solid footway and charged into Puteoli as a conquering foe. There he indulged his victorious army with a day of rest and expectation. On the morrow he placed himself in a triumphal car and drove back exulting in the garb of a charioteer of the Green at the games of the circus. The mock triumph of this entrance was adorned by pretended captives represented by some royal hostages from Parthia who were at the time in the custody of the Roman government. The army followed in long procession. In the center of the bridge the emperor halted and harangued his soldiers on the greatness of their victory from a tribunal erected for the purpose. He contrasted the narrow stream of the Bosphorus and the Hellespont, only seven stades in width, with the broad ocean which he had yoked with chains; and declared that the exploits of Xerxes and Darius were trifles compared with his mightier enterprise. After wearying both himself and his hearers with this prodigious folly he distributed money among them and invited them to a banquet. At nightfall the bridge and the ships were illuminated with torches and at the signal the whole curving line of the coast shone forth, as in a theater, with innumerable lights."

All this was simply useless extravagance, the wild freak of a madman, the whim of a childish tyrant who confounded arbitrary power and splendor with divinity. He did not know of any better way of proving himself to be godlike.

It is possible that some thought of all this blasphemous arrogance may have been in the Apostle Paul's mind when, in 2 Thess. ii, 4, he pictures "the man of sin" to be revealed, as one "who

opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God showing himself that he is God."

In order to keep up his assumed character of a god, Caligula had to accomplish, of course, many mighty things. He completed the temple of Augustus at Rome. He enlarged the imperial residence on the Palatine with oriental extravagance, connecting by descending porticos the palace of Tiberius with the temple of Castor and Pollux. He projected, and perhaps commenced, the great Claudian aqueduct. He brought from Egypt and erected in the Vatican circus the immense granite obelisk, one hundred and thirty-two feet high, which now stands in front of St. Peter's, not very far, indeed, from the locality where he placed it.

But Caligula was so jealous of other men that he caused many statues and monuments that had been erected by Augustus to be thrown down and so broken that the names could not be restored to the figures. He was so consumed with envy that he had a passion for destroying every well-earned reputation. He forbade the circulation of the writings of Virgil, of Livy, and of other famous authors whom Augustus had fostered, and of whom the people were proud. He even threatened to abolish the laws and make his own word and will the rule for mankind. No personal excellence could escape his erratic hostility.

It was inevitable that he should look with hatred

upon the popularity of the distinguished Seneca. This writer and philosopher we have referred to as winning public approval in the days of Tiberius. He had become a great advocate and was beginning to express exalted opinions. Caius prided himself on his brilliant wit, of which, indeed, a few illustrations have come down to us; but he could not tolerate such a noble and talented man as Seneca. He was so displeased with him that he singled him out for immediate execution; but one of the emperor's favorites whispered to him that he need not take the trouble to extinguish an expiring lamp, Seneca was in such poor health at the time. So Seneca escaped, but withdrew into obscurity for the rest of the reign of Caius and devoted himself to his studies and meditations. He abhorred the conduct of the emperor. He speaks of "wretches doomed to undergo stones, sword, fire, and Caius"; and described Caius as one whose "face was ghastly pale with a look of insanity, his eyes half hidden under a wrinkled brow; his ill-shaped head was partly bald, partly covered with dyed hair, his neck covered with bristles, his legs thin and his feet misshapen." On the other hand Caius called Seneca's writings "mere displays" and "sand without lime."

This emperor spent fabulous sums on extraordinary entertainments. It was the custom of the times for the vulgar rich to lay out enormous amounts of money upon the decorations and lux-

urious provisions of their tables, and Caligula was not to be surpassed in this regard by any of them. Viands were set before his guests with fantastic display, chiefly on account of their rarity and costliness. The brains of peacocks and the tongues of nightingales and flamingoes, besides rare birds from distant regious, were only specimens of the extravagant dishes, while pearls dissolved by powerful acids placed in the wine seemed to give an additional relish to the foolish prodigality. He had the most richly furnished banquet-halls, the most elaborate furniture, and the most exquisite music that the empire could furnish.

He was fond of imposing military demonstrations. He celebrated with great pomp a barren victory over the Germans. He made ridiculous boasts over an invasion of Great Britain, an invasion that was abandoned not far from that country's shores.

The people soon became very tired and disgusted with Caligula's revels and dissipations. His extravagance, of course, required increased taxation, and his capricious cruelty put every man's life in jeopardy. He seemed to delight in causing suffering. It is declared that he told his executioners to strike in such a manner that their victims might feel themselves dying, and that once, when a sufficient number of animals was wanting, he commanded some of the spectators in the amphitheater to be thrown to the wild beasts.

His imagination seems to have had a tendency to dwell on cruel and grewsome thoughts, as the following quotation will show:

> "One day at a public banquet, when the consuls were reclining by his side, he burst suddenly into a fit of laughter and, when they courteously inquired the cause of his mirth, astounded them by coolly replying that he was thinking how by one word he could cause the heads of both of them to roll on the floor. He amused himself with similar banter even with his wife Cæsonia, for whom he seems to have had a stronger feeling than for any of his former consorts. While fondling her neck, he is reported to have said, 'Fair as it is, how easily I could sever it!' He did not content himself with such fancies. Too often they were followed by actual cruelty and bloodshed, so that few could laugh at his joking. There was no telling how he would shock the public next."

"This prince," said Seneca, "only lived to show what the greatest vices could do in the circumstances of the highest fortune."

It may be asked: Where was the Roman Senate? Had it no power in the time of such public distress? The senators had more power than they had courage to exercise. They were weak and vacillating, each man fearing for his own life. They were often struck dumb by his imperious and remorseless demands, but the next day they would meet and pay servile court to him.

It was fortunate that Caligula's reign was not long. It lasted less than four years. The suppressed and muttering storm of popular indignation was long reaching its climax. But at last the outburst came, and the merciless lightning fell. He had presided on a certain occasion at the games

at the foot of the Palatine. At the hour of intermission and rest he allowed most of his guard to go up into the palace by the open way, while he entered through the cryptoporticus,—a long tunnel-like passageway under the building, the same one through the shadows of which the modern visitor to the Palatine Hill now generally passes. Hither Cassius Chærea, a tribune of the Guard, whom Caligula had insulted by mockingly imitating his squeaky voice, followed him, with others, and arresting his steps, suddenly struck him upon the head with a sword. Blow followed blow till life was extinct. The bearers of his litter had run to his assistance with their poles, while his small body-guard of Germans had struck wildly at the assassins. But these assassins made their escape from the narrow passage, and left the body where it fell. It was borne in secret by friendly hands to a place of cremation, where it was only partially consumed. Later his sisters, Livia and Agrippina II, reduced it completely to ashes, which they consigned to a decent sepulcher.

The people must have breathed more freely when his death was announced, for they felt that nothing worse could follow and something better might. Caligula is not mentioned in the New Testament, but he was carrying out his wild career while the Gospel was spreading from Jerusalem through Judea and Samaria and as far perhaps as to Antioch. The preaching of Peter and Philip and John, in Samaria, and the conversion

of Saul of Tarsus at about that time would have had no interest for him if he had been told about it.

There is a bronze bust of him in the Hall of the Emperors in the Capitoline Museum at Rome, from which we would suppose him to be somewhat good-looking. He had regular features and an intellectual head, but wore a sort of frown upon his brow. He did not part his hair. None of the first emperors seem to have done that; so it was probably the fashion for other men not to do it. The bust represents him as wearing a corselet over the woven garment that falls in folds from his shoulders. There is some alertness and vigor in the face. Perhaps in his youth he was a possible statesman. If so, he was badly spoilt by his early training in a hot-bed of corruption and sensuality. His name is a black spot upon the history of a period dark enough at best, and is never mentioned but to be despised.

CLAUDIUS

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CHAPTER IV

CLAUDIUS, THE STOLID

After Caligula's death the Senate was convened in the Temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline Hill,—not in the accustomed Curia or Senate House, because that bore the now hated name of Julian from the family to which the slain emperor belonged. The body first of all issued decrees denouncing the tyranny of Caligula and giving honor to the "restorers of public freedom," as the assassins were called, and especially to the ringleader of these, Chærea. They also granted a remission of some of the most unpopular taxes that Caligula had enforced. Some were ready to vote that the memory of the Cæsars should be entirely abolished and that the government should be restored to the simple republican form it had in the days of the Scipios and Cato. Others thought that the monarchy should be continued, but in an entirely different family line.

Chærea, emboldened by his public honors, gave orders to a military tribune, who hastened to put to death Caligula's wife and only child. It was properly a question for the Senate to decide,—who should be the successor to the imperial

throne. While that body was deliberating, the matter was summarily settled by the action of the Prætorian Guards. In the general confusion some of them had begun plundering the imperial palace. There they had found, half-hidden behind a curtain in an obscure corner, a man about fifty-five years old, whom they recognized as Claudius, the son of Drusus and the uncle of Caligula. He sank at their feet probably expecting nothing but death. But they dared not do otherwise than respect the blood of the Cæsars. They were more loyal than the great body of the Senators to the royal family. So they hailed Claudius as emperor and carried him, astonished and protesting, to their camp. When in the morning it was found that the Senate had come to no conclusion, Claudius found courage to allow the soldiers to have their way and to swear allegiance to him. In return for their devotion he promised them a large donation in money.

Herod Agrippa I, who had been such a friend of Caligula and who was still in Rome, advised the Senators that the wisest thing that they could do would be to yield to the wishes of the soldiers. This was an act for which, as we shall see, he was afterward generously rewarded by Claudius. In spite of some determined opposition, therefore, he was proclaimed the successor to the throne, the first of many Roman emperors who owed their elevation to the military power of the prætorian guard.

Claudius was born at Lugdunum, or Lyons, in Gaul, August first, in the year 9, or 10, before Christ. From his childhood he seems to have been weak in body and retiring in spirit. He had been neglected, if not despised, by the great Augustus. His own parents had been ashamed of him as a feeble invalid. He had not been thought of as worthy to fill any high office at the imperial court. He had once asked the emperor Tiberius for larger responsibilities, but had received scarcely more than empty honors. He is said to have had some form of paralysis, to have trembled in his hands and to have had an imperfect utterance. Caligula had elevated him to the consulship and had given him an honorable seat at public spectacles; but in private he had been made the butt of coarse jokes and of much ridicule. He had resigned himself, therefore, to quiet pursuits, had settled down to the opinion that there were no great things for him in life, and had turned his attention to literary studies. He was the author, with some assistance, of several historical volumes and of a life of Cicero. He may have been, for that period, a fair sort of citizen, and when he was made emperor it was certainly an agreeable change for the people from the outrageous extravagancies of Caligula.

At the outset of his reign he modified some of the harsh enactments of his predecessors; returned to their owners several private estates, which had been confiscated; gave back to various

cities the statues of heroes, which had been removed from them, and restored the temples, which Caligula had desecrated, to their original uses. He also executed the murderer of Caligula. Fearing violence, he caused his own person to be guarded. He respected the dignity of the Senate, made the Senators responsible for the discharge of their duties, and increased their number by promoting to that honor men from the equestrian rank.

In this matter he did not confine his view to Italy but extended it to Gaul, the province in which he had been born. He made a speech in the Senate defending the measure. This speech was copied on brazen tablets and preserved by the people of Lugdunum (Lyons). One of these was discovered three centuries ago and is now to be seen, well preserved and clearly legible, in the museum of that city. He discontinued all encouragement to spies and informers. He ordained that sick slaves abandoned in the temple of Esculapius should be free if they recovered. He provided also for the amusements of the people, keeping up the popular gladiatorial shows and sometimes going as far as to bandy jokes with the bystanders about the performers. His responsibilities developed in him unexpected independence and force; and all these labors were not unfavorable to the improvement of his health.

The Roman army was active at this time on the frontiers of Gaul and Germany. Claudius deter-

mined to carry out the plan that Augustus had formed of invading Britain. He even entered that country in person, crossing the channel and joining the Roman general, Aulus Plautius, in his campaign against the natives. He was absent from Rome six months and achieved such military success that on his return a public triumph was accorded to him by the Senate. On this occasion he added to his name the title Britannicus, which afterwards became also the special designation of his son.

A little later in the reign of Claudius, Caractacus, a British chief, who had resisted the Roman forces, was captured and brought to Rome, with his wife and daughter. All at the imperial court were impressed with the noble bearing of this prisoner as he pleaded eloquently for his life. Claudius, let it be said to his credit, extended to him the imperial clemency. I shall have occasion to refer to the invasion of Britian by Claudius when I come to speak, in a later chapter, of Paul's friends at Rome and among them of the woman Claudia and her possible British origin and relations.

Claudius was generous and tactful with the princes who were subject to the Roman empire. He established Antiochus in Comagene, Mithridates on the Bosphorus, for the favor I have mentioned, and Herod Agrippa I in Galilee with Judea and Samaria added to his domain. It was during the reign of Claudius that this Herod Agrippa I

''stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church,'' as Luke records for us in the twelfth chapter of the Acts. ''And he killed James, the brother of John, with the sword. And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also.'' Peter was wonderfully delivered from prison. But Herod was soon after smitten with a dreadful disease. It was when he had made a proud demonstration before the people, as is described to us in the same chapter as follows:

> Herod was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon: but they came with one accord to him, and, having made Blastus the king's chamberlain their friend, desired peace; because their country was nourished by the king's country. And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne and made an oration unto them. And the people gave a shout, saying, ''It is the voice of a god and not of a man.'' And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory; and he was eaten of worms and gave up the ghost. But the word of God grew and multiplied.

The famous cities of Trèves in France, Cologne on the Rhine, and Colchester in England owe their origin to the reign of Claudius. The original name of Cologne was Colonia Agrippinensis for Agrippina, who was born in this vicinity. As empress she assumed a leadership in military matters never before occupied by a woman, and made it her boast that she was the first of her sex thus to found a colony of Roman veterans. Colchester, meaning the camp on the river Còlne, was on the site of the ancient town of Camelodunum, the

residence of the principal potentate of southern Britain, the chief of the Trinobantes. When these people were put to flight, Claudius established there a Roman camp and colony to keep them and the other barbarous tribes in awe. They were taught to ascribe the victory of the Romans to the favor of certain divinities; and among the shrines erected in the colony was a temple of unusual size for the worship of Claudius himself. Such divine honors, we have seen, had sometimes been accepted by his predecessors. Two miles of city walls and other relics dating from the period of the Roman occupation may still be seen at Colchester.

From Caius Caligula, Claudius had received an exhausted public treasury and empty granaries. Scanty harvests produced several periods of famine in different parts of the world. Secular historians say that one of these occurred in Palestine and Syria during his reign. We read in Acts ii, 28, how such a famine was predicted by the prophet Agabus at Antioch, so that the disciples there determined to send relief to their brethren in Judea, which they did by the hands of Barnabas and Saul; and the sacred writer says this famine occurred in the days of Claudius Cæsar. As one of the means for bringing Egyptian wheat to Rome more quickly, and thus preventing such periods of destitution of bread in the imperial city again, Claudius directed the building of a larger harbor at the mouth of the Tiber, an enterprise

that required much massive masonry and which for a long while facilitated the commerce of the empire. In course of time the action of stream and wind and tide has filled up and wellnigh obliterated it. He also in seven years carried on to completion the mighty aqueduct for bringing water to Rome from the Alban hills,—an engineering achievement that has been always known as the Claudian Aqueduct. The traveler still wonders at its great arches stretching across the lonely Campagna. Tunneling a mountain to afford a better outlet for Lake Fucinus was another great piece of engineering in his day, the completion of which was fitly celebrated by naval evolutions and a sham battle on the Lake.

If we could confine our view of Claudius to the facts now stated, we might think of him as one who in many respects quite disappointed the low estimate of him that the majority of men held at the beginning of his career. But, alas! his great weakness lay in his proneness to be too easily duped and controlled by others. This was specially marked in the influence over him of his vicious wives. The first lady who was betrothed to him in his youth was repudiated by him because she was not approved by the emperor Augustus. The next died on the day appointed for the nuptials. The third, named Urgalania, became the mother of two children. One of these was choked to death by a pear he tried to swallow. Afterward Claudius divorced this wife, having discovered that

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she was unfaithful; and he ordered her second child to be exposed to die. The next wife was also divorced as unsuitable. The last two were Messalina and Agrippina, both of whom, as we shall see, lived to acquire great infamy.

Messalina, the granddaughter of Mark Antony, was married to Claudius when he had no prospect of coming to the throne. She is said to have been at that time only fifteen years old. She became an intensely ambitious woman, of no moral principle. She was particularly jealous of Julia and Agrippina, the two nieces of the emperor, who, like herself, were brilliant but wicked women. She had no respect for her husband, and when he became emperor used her position to gain her personal ends. She was frightfully immoral. Her name, indeed, has become a byword for female depravity. She took bribes from others and wheedled presents from her husband.

After the accession of Claudius, the philosopher Seneca had emerged from the obscurity into which the jealousy of Caligula had forced him. It would have been well for his own peace of mind if he had continued to pursue his reflections in private. It has been well said that all Seneca gained for himself from his career of ambition at court was to be suspected by one emperor, banished by a second, and murdered by a third.

Claudius was not only under the influence of an infamous wife but he had also given himself largely to be controlled by certain evil men chosen

from the ranks of freedmen. The lower class of Roman slaves had little hope of bettering their condition. But there was a higher class, principally from Greece and Syria, who were finely trained and educated, and who could calculate on obtaining their freedom early in life, when they might come into many opportunities of being the favorite employees, if not the intimate counselors, of their former masters and others. Some of them were shrewd enough to rise to great distinction and power and figure prominently upon the pages of history. In the court of Claudius there were several freedmen of this character. There were Narcissus, his private secretary; Polybius, his literary adviser, and Pallas, his accountant. We may also include another freedman of whom we read in Scripture, Felix, the brother of Pallas, who became the procurator of Judea, before whom the Apostle Paul was arraigned. The first three of these men, if not the fourth, became noted for their accumulation of great riches and for their insolence. Some scholars,—such as Lightfoot and Ramsey,—have thought that the Narcissus we here speak of was the man some of the slaves of whose household were known to the Apostle Paul to be Christians and secured from him greetings in Romans xvi, 11.

Narcissus, Polybius, and Pallas gradually came into control of the execution of the laws. Two of them, Narcissus and Pallas, acquired their wealth often by dishonest means. Once when Claudius

complained that the imperial revenues were too small, it was replied that he would be rich enough if his two wealthy freedmen would take him into partnership. By their accusations they obtained from Claudius severe judgments on different individuals whom they hated. He was aroused by them to put down some conspiracies against his own person, but seems scarcely to have been aware of many evils that were flourishing while he was maintaining the routine of government or presiding at splendid banquets. At these he disgraced himself by gluttony and intemperance. A stolid worker in his prime, he became a stupid dotard in his age.

The Roman court had now become so degenerate that its record takes the form of a scandalous chronicle. It was surely a miserable place for a man to be found who put forth, as did Seneca, exalted apothegms of moral philosophy. Using opportunities for the investment of inherited wealth, he became extremely rich and, although he was one of the most enlightened men of his age, he had allowed himself to be placed in a most contaminating environment. Perhaps it was his detestation of the conduct of the empress that made him a partisan of her rivals, so that Messalina could find a pretext for accusing him of an intrigue with Julia. Julia was exiled and then put to death.

No positive evidence of Seneca's guilt has come down to us. On the contrary, he has been pro-

nounced innocent by some students of history. But he was condemned by the Senate and banished to the barren shores of Corsica. He tells us that Claudius tried to prevent this, but Messalina's schemes were too deeply laid to be thwarted. It is remarkable that Seneca does not abuse her in any of his writings that have come down to us. He bade farewell to his noble-minded mother and his beloved brother Gallio, to his nephew Lucan, the promising young poet, and to Marcus his little boy, and then left the city, banishment from which was the sorest of trials to a Roman. He retired to his place of exile. There, amid disagreeable surroundings, he consoled himself with his philosophy and wrote a "Consolation" to his mother, Helvia, which is one of the noblest of his works. It must, however, be admitted that his fine moral precepts did not prevent his writing a letter to Polybius in which he abjectly flatters Claudius, manifestly in order to secure his release and his return to Rome. If he expected this through the intervention of Polybius, he was disappointed, for that freedman and favorite, though he had formerly much influence with Messalina, soon forfeited his life through her machinations.

Messalina succeeded a long time in concealing her real character, but when her shamelessness reached its highest pitch in her open marriage to another man, the indignation of the emperor was aroused. Then followed a new scene of tragedy. She had apparently persuaded Claudius that it

was a mock marriage for a frolic, but all Rome knew better and regarded it not only as a vile procedure but an attempt to usurp the political throne. Some time before this, Messalina had coveted the gardens on the Pincian Hill, which had long been famous as the property of the luxurious Lucullus, and which at the present day may be a part of the grounds of the Villa Medici. After Lucullus it belonged to Valerius Asiaticus. So Messalina had suborned her son's tutor, Silius, to accuse Asiaticus of corrupting the army. Thus she secured his death and then took possession of the gardens. Here, as the wild revelries that followed the detestable wedding ceremonies were at their height, one of the guests, Vettius Valens, climbed to the top of a tree; and, when they asked what he saw, he replied in language intended for a jest:

"I see a fierce storm approaching from Ostia."

It was well known that the emperor was at that place. The storm was indeed approaching. Messengers soon arrived, saying Claudius was on the way. The news fell like a thunderbolt. Messalina implored the protection of Vibidia, the chief of the Vestal Virgins. With her children she hastened across the city to the Ostian gate to plead for the emperor's mercy on his arrival. She mounted the cart of a market gardener, which happened to be passing. But Narcissus absorbed the attention of the emperor as she approached by accounts of her crimes; and Messalina was coldly

passed by. That evening, as Claudius enjoyed the pleasures of his table, he showed some signs of softened feeling at mention of her. Narcissus knew that delay would be dangerous to himself. So he sent a tribune and centurions to kill the empress in the garden of Lucullus, to which she had returned. She was weeping in despair when the doors were battered down and the tribune and his men stood before her. She took a dagger in her hand and when she had twice stabbed herself in vain the tribune gave the fatal blow. In her death she has been well compared with Jezebel of old, who was slain on or near the ground she had wickedly taken from its owner. Claudius was still lingering at his dinner when he was informed that she had perished. He asked no questions and manifested no emotion.

Not long after this the emperor married Agrippina II, the sister of Caligula, and the daughter of Germanicus and the older Agrippina. To distinguish her from her mother she is generally called Agrippina the Second. She was a niece of Claudius.

The marriage of such close relations was repugnant to most Romans. But the artful woman managed to overcome all objections, and the wedding took place. She had inherited none of the virtues of her distinguished parents, had been brought up by wicked relatives, and had been married to Cnæus Domitius Ahenobarbus, one of the worthless young nobles of that day. By him

she had one son, upon whom she lavished her natural affections. After her marriage to the emperor she worked constantly in the interests of this son, cherishing for him the greatest expectations. One of her first steps was to secure his betrothal to Octavia, the daughter of the emperor. She also induced Claudius formally to adopt him into the Claudian family, to place him in the line of succession with his own son, Britannicus, and, inasmuch as he was three years older than Britannicus, to give him actual precedence in many honors. On this adoption the young man received a new name and became known as Claudius Domitius Nero.

Agrippina also managed to get rid,—by banishment, disgrace, or death,—of one after another of the women who had been her rivals at the imperial court. Among these were Lepida and Calpurnia. Against the rich Lollia Paulina she brought a charge of sorcery and treason, and so obtained the confiscation of most of her property and her banishment from Italy. It is said that not even this satisfied her, but that she sent a tribune to bring her the head of her enemy, and that when it was laid before her she lifted the lips with her own hand to make sure, by marks on the teeth, of its identity. This horrid story is quoted by Merivale and others from the ancient historian, Dion. It has been well said that she must have even surpassed Lady Macbeth in her malignant and frigid cruelty.

Tacitus says that it was with a hope of counteracting the unpopularity that these horrors had aroused in the public mind that Agrippina recalled Seneca from his exile in Corsica and made him the tutor of her son. Thus, again, was this great philosopher brought back into the scenes of court and the public life at Rome. And thus Agrippina would undo some of the work of Messalina, whom she had heartily hated. She may have been influenced also by the consideration that Seneca was indignant with Claudius, and this might make him more helpful to her and to her son if any antagonism should arise between her and her husband. Of course, it would have been better for Seneca if he had stayed in Corsica. He came back into a most perilous environment. He may have been encouraged to do so by the knowledge that a man of the old faithful type, Afranius Burrus, was to have the very important post of prefect of the prætorian guard. Perhaps these two men were patriotic in their purpose and trusted that they were going to be able to keep matters from growing worse.

Agrippina, while she left to the emperor the friends he liked and all the insignia of power, constantly abused his confidence. It is strange that he was so pliant to her scheming and malicious will. He seems to have been, ordinarily, dull and stupid, but when aroused he was impulsive and vindictive. At last his freedman and secretary, Narcissus, began to open his eyes to the

extent to which he had been duped by his wife and to her disregard of all obligations to him. He seemed deeply moved by the discovery and remarked that it had been his fate always to bear and then to punish the wickedness of his wives.

These words, repeated to Agrippina, showed her clearly that if she was going to succeed in her purpose of getting the throne for her son, Nero, it would not do for her to risk any delay. She knew that she could do nothing injurious to her husband in the presence of his secretary, Narcissus. So she arranged with the physician of Narcissus that he should be sent away to some medicinal springs for his health. When he was gone she proceeded with her atrocious plan. By some means she secured the connivance of Halotes, the emperor's prægustator (the slave whose duty it was to protect him from poison by tasting every dish before it was presented to him) and of Xenephon of Cos, his physician. Then she consulted with Locusta, the infamous woman who is known to have been a professional poisoner, often resorted to in those turbulent days. The very existence of such a person is a frightful indication of the prevailing enormities. A compound was sought that might be best suited for the special purpose, not too rapid in its action to excite suspicion and not too slow, lest Claudius should have time to arrange something for Britannicus. The poison was administered to him in a dish of mushrooms, of which he was extravagantly fond. It is said that

Agrippina herself handed him a choice morsel of the food when he was somewhat intoxicated, and it immediately caused him to be silent. Afterward, when there were indications that, on account of his gluttony, it might be ineffective, a physician was induced, under pretense of causing vomiting and so giving him relief from pain, to thrust a feather smeared with a deadly liquid down his throat. This completed the wicked work. Before morning this Cæsar was a corpse.

While all these exciting scenes were taking place in the reign of Claudius, the Apostle Paul had been prosecuting his wonderfully earnest ministry of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and was making missionary journeys in Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Greece. It is in connection with his meeting Aquila and Priscilla at Corinth that we read in Acts xviii, 1, that "Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome." The Roman historian, Suetonius, speaks of this decree and says it was issued because the Jews were "constantly making a disturbance, Chrestus being the instigator." No prominent Jew named Chrestus being otherwise known in the records of that time, some have queried whether Chrestus may not be here a Latin corruption of the Greek word Christos, and whether these disturbances among the Jews may not have been disputes about the Christ, or Messiah, whom they expected, or even about Jesus as claiming to be that Messiah. The

suggestion is interesting, but we cannot prove it to be correct.

Like his predecessors, Claudius is represented to us by ancient art in the shape of many statues and busts. The one chosen to illustrate these pages shows him to us in a flattering manner, as if he possessed the attributes of Jupiter. He is standing half-draped, with a wreath of oak leaves about his head, his left hand upraised to grasp the upper end of a long staff, and with an eagle at his right foot. The figure is not without some majesty, but there seems to be a look of anxiety and weariness upon his face. Surely, he had enough to make him anxious and weary in both his public and his private life. Unexpectedly called upon to be an emperor, he had wrought industriously in the public service; but he had not been equal to the moral strain of such a high position and had been the undiscerning dupe of iniquitous and malicious enemies. His worst foes had been those of his own household.

CHAPTER V

NERO, THE CRUEL

Lucius Domitius Nero, the next Roman emperor, was, as we have seen, the stepson of Claudius and the grandson of the famous Germanicus, who was a brother of Claudius. His mother was Agrippina II, the sister of Caligula. This Agrippina became the last wife of Claudius; but Nero was her son by her former husband, Lucius Domitius. The Domitian gens, or family, had been a famous one for several generations and the particular branch of it to which Nero's father belonged, namely, the Ahenobarbi, or brazen-beards, had long been prominent for its ability, its wealth, and its power. At the same time it had been noted for the faithlessness and ferocity shown by many of its representatives. Suetonius tells the story that the first Lucius Domitius, the founder of the line, was the man to whom Castor and Pollux announced the victory that had taken place at Lake Regillus, when they rode into Rome, and that his beard was then changed from black to red in token of that supernaturàl manifestation. The Ahenobarbi always inherited, it is said, the complexion as well as the name.

NERO

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When Nero was three years old his father died. His uncle, the emperor Caligula, managed to cheat him out of his inheritance, but afterward the emperor Claudius restored it to him, added to it other property, and bestowed upon him many honors. His mother sought to have him properly educated and to have his manners cultivated according to the best standards of the time. He is said, as a boy, to have been affectionate, with some aptness to learn, and fond of praise.

As the niece of Claudius, Agrippina had been allowed to occupy a place in the imperial palace next to the empress Messalina herself. When Messalina's dissolute character became manifest to all, Agrippina, as we have related, took advantage of it to increase her own favor with the emperor and the interests of her son as a possible successor to the throne. It was an audacious dream, because he would be thus put in the place of Britannicus, the emperor's son by Messalina. After Messalina's wretched death, and when Agrippina had reached the summit of her ambition and had become the wife of Claudius (the Senate having passed a special edict to sanction this union of an uncle with his niece), this artful woman was able still more successfully to make her own son prominent and to keep Britannicus in the background.

We have stated that the philosopher Seneca was called back from the exile, in which,—probably owing to the hatred of Messalina,—he had been

living on the island of Corsica; and was chosen to be the special instructor of the young Nero. Seneca was not only a keen theorist in statesmanship and morals but he was shrewd also in matters of business, and had a taste for public affairs. He was probably as good an instructor as could have been found for such a service at that time. He was, however, very lenient with his royal pupil. He found in him a coarse nature with strong impulses. He adopted the plan of trying to allure him to his tasks by indulging him at other times in his lighter tastes. The young man became proficient in singing, in playing upon pipes, and in dancing, though these accomplishments had been disapproved by conservative Romans as inappropriate to the military life of the conquerors of mankind. But Seneca seems to have gone further in yielding to Nero's natural inclinations. He connived at some of his vices. Surrounded by flatterers and schemers and depraved caterers to immorality, Nero early imbibed evil principles and adopted corrupt practices. He was inflated with conceit and bred to foolish ostentation. The wickedness of his own mother must have gone far to destroy in him all sentiments of virtue. What could be expected of an impulsive young man with such an heredity and such an environment?

While he was put forward to be the public advocate of measures that were popular, Agrippina reserved for Britannicus nothing but neglect. The attendants of the latter's childhood, between

whom and himself there had sprung up a mutual affection, were, one by one, removed from him through her influence, and he was left as much as possible in the shadow.

When Claudius was dead Agrippina put the climax upon her crafty management by keeping the announcement from the public until everything was ready. She even gave out word that her husband was better and took care to retain Britannicus and his sisters under her close surveillance. To those in the palace who knew that Claudius was dead she pretended the greatest grief until noon of the next day. Then, when Burrus the Prefect walked across the courtyard to present the successor to the throne to the prætorian guard, it was not Britannicus but Nero that walked by his side. Some, indeed, ventured to express the murmur:

"Where is Britannicus?"

But there was no one to champion his cause; and so the son of Agrippina was saluted as the emperor. It is also related that on the first evening of his imperial power, when a sentinel of the palace came to ask him for the watchword for the night, he, knowing well to whom he was indebted for his throne, returned the words, "Optima Mater,"—"The Best of Mothers." To what extent this feeling of gratitude was maintained by him in later years we shall see.

Seneca, poet and philosopher, is said to have written a satire on the death of the emperor

Claudius. The Senate, following foolish precedents, had declared that he had become a god. This satire represented him as having become a gourd. The Senate had ascribed to him divinity. The satire spoke jocosely of his pumpkinity. Some eulogists of the philosopher are loth to believe the identity, but many writers contend that this satire was substantially the same as the well-known ancient writing called the "Play Upon the Death of Nero" that has come down to us, which bears many of the marks of Seneca's style and which describes in a burlesque manner the reception and disgrace of Claudius among the gods. It is overflowing with contempt for the emperor, in strange contrast with the almost abject flattery that Seneca had written of him when he was anxious to win his favor and so get back from exile. Altogether, it is difficult to relieve Seneca from the charge of time-serving and hypocrisy. It is so much easier to write noble sentiments in regard to disinterestedness than it is to practice them in days of temptation! From ridicule of the dead emperor the satire goes on to welcome the new one in flowery language. It says:

> "As when the bright sun gazes on the world and starts his chariot on his daily race; so Cæsar breaks upon the earth. Such is the Nero whom Rome now beholds!"

Nero was seventeen years of age when he was thus called to govern the civilized world. Wearied by the atrocities of his predecessors, the people could not but welcome the fair-faced youth in

whose antecedents there was not much to excite serious apprehension. His busts represent him as having at this time a round face, a not displeasing countenance, and a slight beard. His hair is said to have been yellowish, or sandy. His figure was not well proportioned,—his neck being thick, his body large and his legs slender. His eyes were dark gray and their sight was somewhat impaired. He was careless in his dress, yet fond of finery. He particularly took care of his locks, arranging them in a manner somewhat effeminate. He sometimes greatly offended fastidious taste by going with his feet bare, with his girdle loose, and wearing (even in public) a sort of dressing-gown. He entered upon his imperial career with a good degree of physical health and strength.

From his very accession Nero felt uneasy on account of the jealousy of Britannicus. He knew that the sense of right would assert itself in the breasts of many in behalf of Britannicus and might become dangerous to his reign. He therefore proceeded with caution. He pronounced a funeral oration over Claudius, which Seneca is believed to have composed for him. In it he made many conciliatory promises. There were not any of the nobles who had courage to call in question his claims. They cared not to risk their heads simply for the sake of a mere righteous succession. They preferred to tolerate him as long as he treated them with respect. They held the weak-

ness of his title to the throne as a weapon to be used against him if he should offend them.

Meanwhile Seneca and Burrus, the young emperor's principal advisers, did all they could to make his government a good one and so establish its authority. Their chief difficulties were to control his headstrong nature and to prevent his mother from exercising too much influence over him. She, who had supplanted Messalina and had murdered Claudius, was not going to let her power go, if she could help it. She leagued herself with Pallas, the wealthy and unprincipled freedman at court, and it soon became evident that she was making trouble.

Her son, too, at first was too ready to give her honors. She was borne in public in the same litter with him. She caused coins to be stamped having her head with his upon them. She sent dispatches to foreign courts and gave answers to ambassadors. She even ordered the murder of Silanus, the proconsul of Asia, who was obnoxious to her. Burrus and Seneca were alarmed at her bold assumptions of authority. They determined to break down her power at any cost. To draw away Nero from confiding too much in her they even favored his intrigue with a freedwoman named Acte, which greatly enraged Agrippina. And this rage was increased when Nero removed Pallas from his position of influence and dismissed him from court.

Agrippina then declared herself the patroness

of Britannicus, notwithstanding she had set him aside to bring Nero to the throne, and she appealed to the army to make that young man now the emperor in the place of her son. Nero saw there was danger of a revolution. He therefore adopted the iniquitous course then so common with jealous rulers. He had Britannicus poisoned. The poison, it is said, was prepared under the emperor's own eyes and was administered in the wine-cup of Britannicus as he sat at a banquet in the palace. The youth fell back lifeless, but Nero passed the occurrence by as one of the fits, to which, he said, his brother was subject. That same night the corpse of Britannicus was solemnly cremated with funeral ceremony on the Campus Martius.

Nero then tried to divert attention from the event and to cover up his crime by showering presents, houses, and estates on the favorites of the palace. The much praised philosopher, Seneca, extolled the clemency of Nero during this, the first year of his reign; yet this cool and calculated murder of Britannicus seems to have occurred within the limits of that year. Seneca probably tried to excuse himself by saying that, if Nero should not be sustained, Agrippina would flourish in her power; and that would be worse for the public weal. Meanwhile, he directed the administration of the national affairs in a manner to please the Senate and made the first five years of Nero a prosperous time for the great body of the

people. They were afterward spoken of as a period of great happiness. This must have been largely in contrast with the great gloom that followed; yet doubtless Nero was to a great extent then pliant to the advice of his tutor and the prefect.

Nero prudently declined having magnificent statues erected in his honor. He reserved severe measures for notorious criminals, and seems even to have been touched at times with emotion of compassion. Seneca, to increase the youthful emperor's popularity, circulated an anecdote of him to the effect that when asked to affix his signature to an order for the execution of a condemned person he exclaimed:

"How I wish that I did not know how to write."

But these moments of tenderness seem to have been only of short duration. The spirit which had been manifested in the poisoning of Britannicus soon reappeared in other acts of meanness and cruelty. He had been trained from his childhood in too hard and selfish a school.

The emperor's mother, Agrippina, was continuing to plot against him, and her various designs to disenthrone him were, of course, reported to him. This disturbed him in the midst of the recklessness with which he was carrying on his debaucheries with his boon companions. "The Best of Mothers," as he had called her on his accession, had now become the worst of his relentless enemies. She seems to have allowed all her

maternal affection for him to be chilled by the disappointment of her love of personal power.

For our knowledge of those times we are indebted largely to the "Annals" of Tacitus. Some questions arise as to the reliability of his accounts. Josephus, who, as a foreigner, may have been more impartial, says that different historians of Nero's reign were swayed by opposite prejudices; yet he believed in the poisoning of Britannicus and in other cruel murders by Nero now to be related.

Poppæa Sabina, one of the fairest but wickedest women in Rome, aspired to supplant Octavia, the emperor's wife, and concentrated her fascinations upon him. Nero sent her husband to a distant province and she suffered him to depart without a sigh. Nero's mother, Agrippina, was of course much in the way of Poppæa's designs, so Poppæa laid her plan most diligently to get rid of the older woman. She taunted the emperor with being afraid of his mother and put before him all the movements of Agrippina in the darkest light, until Nero was persuaded. His regard for his mother was already changed to hatred.

With the aid of Anicetus, the commander of the fleet at Misenum,—who had a spite against Agrippina,—a plan was formed by which she was induced to embark on a barge, which, at a given signal, was to break in pieces. The plan was not successful. The mechanism failed to work. Yet the sailors managed to tip the ship so that Agrip-

pina and her companions were thrown into the water. She succeeded by the aid of some fishermen in reaching the shore in safety. Seeing that her only chance lay in dissimulation, she sent one of her freedmen to tell her son that by the mercy of heaven she had escaped from a terrible accident, but that he need not be alarmed and must not come to her, as she greatly needed rest and quiet.

When Nero received the account he was thrown into the greatest anxiety, knowing that now his mother had discovered his plot against her and would certainly seek revenge. In great agitation of mind he sent for Burrus and Seneca to come to him instantly. Laying before them the situation, he looked from one to the other in suspense for their advice. There was a long and painful silence. At last Seneca asked Burrus if the soldiers could be trusted to put her to death. When the reply was given that the prætorians would do nothing to injure a daughter of Germanicus and that Anicetus should complete the work he had begun, Anicetus showed himself willing to do so. He trumped up another charge against Agrippina and hurried off to her villa at Bauli. There he and his minions found her in a dimly lighted chamber, attended by a single handmaid, who immediately rose to steal away.

"Dost thou, too, desert me?" said the wretched Agrippina.

The armed men surrounded her couch. Anicetus

AGRIPPINA II AND NERO

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was the first to strike. The rest immediately followed his example, and she was dispatched with many blows. Almost with her last breath she cried out against the perfidy of her ungrateful son.

If we are to believe many writers, Nero never ceased after this murder of his mother to be troubled with a guilty conscience. Yet he wrote at the time a letter to the Senate from Naples declaring that his mother had conspired against his life and that in the confusion caused by her detection she had miserably perished by her own hand. The disaster of the ship he declared to have been purely accidental. It is painful to record the altogether probable fact that the real author of this shameful document was Seneca, who thus put the emperor's message into words for him. It affirmed that the death of the imperious woman should be regarded as a public benefit. But such declarations from such a source gave little satisfaction. So widely was Nero believed to be guilty of Agrippina's murder that at Rome the sack, the instrument of death for parricides, was secretly hung about his statues and the names of the triad of conspicuous matricides, Nero, Orestes, and Alcmæon, were found posted by night upon the walls. Yet the nobles were servile enough to welcome him back with honor, and the populace was diverted and gratified by the new and extravagant shows that he provided for all. The multitude even cheered him as he threw aside all

his dignity as an emperor and went himself upon the stage as an actor or drove recklessly in the Circus Maximus as a charioteer. He delighted in everything sensational and spectacular; in noise and show and speed—what pleasure he would have taken in locomotives and automobiles had they existed in his day. It could not be said that the laws were not respected or that the citizens, as a body, were not at peace. But there were wild extravagances and follies to startle and distress the people. And that was not all. There were so much dissipation and licentiousness in high places that all the best people in the empire were scandalized and it was evident that the moral strength of the nation was undermined.

Nero was sowing to the wind and he was sure to reap the whirlwind. Satirical voices began to make themselves heard. Then Burrus, the strong soldier and wise counselor, died; and Nero divided his command between Fenius Rufus, a timid and subservient man, and Tigellinus, one of his own infamous associates.

The influence of Seneca, which in many respects had tended to wisdom and moderation, was thus undermined and broken. He had gained nothing by his temporizing with evil, his policy of compromise and mildness. Perhaps Nero himself had become disgusted with him for saying one thing in his philosophic maxims and pursuing the opposite course in his practice. He no longer treated Seneca with veneration. Chagrined and broken-hearted

POPPÆA

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the latter withdrew to a less conspicuous life. Rubellius Plautus and Sulla, two prominent men, of whom Nero was jealous, were put to death by the emperor's order, and at the instigation of Tigellinus. The assassinations were accomplished by messengers sent from the imperial court to the provinces where they lived. Nero pretended to be delivered thus from two dangerous adversaries and required the Senate to congratulate him. He even declared to friends that he was now free to celebrate his marriage with Poppæa, without fear of any rival who might profit by the public commiseration for his wife Octavia. This woman, who was the daughter of Claudius and whose life at court had been one of constant distress, was ruthlessly condemned and seized, upon some arrogant pretext, and her veins were opened with a knife. Her head was severed from her body and carried to her enemy, the cruel Poppæa. After this all restraints of decency and self-respect were thrown off and wild orgies went on in the imperial palaces.

In the tenth year of Nero's reign Rome was swept by a terrible fire. It began at the eastern end of the Circus Maximus, between the Palatine and Cælian hills. It swept along the bases of the Palatine and Aventine hills, through the Velabrum on the one hand and the Forum on the other. It raged six days, destroying both private dwellings and public buildings. Many of the old cherished landmarks of Rome, like the Regia (or

palace) of Numa, the Temple of Jupiter Stator, and the Temple of Vesta, were ruined. When it was thought to have subsided a renewal of it, or another fire, broke out on the outskirts of the city beneath the Pincian hill and raged toward the Viminal and the Quirinal. Of the fourteen districts, or regions of the city, three were entirely obliterated, while seven others were more or less severely injured. Not only noted buildings but elegant patrician homes and many rare works of art,—works that could not be duplicated,—were altogether lost.

The poorer people, of course, were brought into a condition of great hardship and suffering. The conflagration occurred when the tyrannies and cruelties of Nero had largely increased the number of his personal enemies, when mutterings of contempt and hatred against him had become frequent, and when his iniquitous excesses had led many to believe that he could be guilty of anything. The fact that some incendiaries were seen at work, who said they were acting under orders, and the rumor that while the city was burning Nero had watched the flames from the tower of his villa, and had there chanted the "Sack of Troy" with the accompaniment of his own lyre, favored the suspicion that he had himself caused the awful calamity. Some claimed that he did it in order that he might rebuild the capital more magnificently and call the new Rome by his own name. But these suspicions cannot be proved.

It is enough to affirm that under the additional miseries caused by the fire the people had become bold to express their exasperation with the existing reign. Not even the imposing religious ceremonies, conducted to appease the gods, could quiet the popular outcries. Nero seems to have felt that it was necessary to divert suspicions from himself by presenting other victims.

Tacitus tells us that to save himself, this emperor sacrificed "those whom, hated on account of their vices, the vulgar called Christians." This name, he says, was derived from one Christus, who was executed in the reign of Tiberius by the procurator of Judea, Pontius Pilate. And he adds that "the accursed superstition, for a moment repressed, spread again, not over Judea only, the source of this evil, but in Rome also, where all things vile and shameful find room and reception." This Neronian persecution, so horrible in its bitterness and bloodshed, we shall have occasion to consider later in connection with the sufferings of the early Christian martyrs.

We may remark here that some, such as the historian Gibbon, have found a difficulty in accepting the plain assertions of Tacitus and Suetonius on this subject on the ground that there was nothing in the known habits and teachings of the Christians at this early period to call down upon them such bitter hatred. They were peaceable citizens and had hardly yet become distinct from the Jews in the observation of the Romans. It has been

suggested that Tacitus and others, writing some time after the event, were describing what was really a persecution of the Jews in Rome and that, because they had incurred the displeasure of Nero by their turbulent disputes over an expected Christ or over certain false Christs and because, in Tacitus' time, the Christians proclaimed the Christ as having come, the historian had not kept these facts distinct and was attributing to the Christians an unpopularity which, so early, belonged to them only as part of the Jews. Merivale suggests that there may be an element of truth in this theory. That is to say, the Jews, when persecuted for their Messianic enthusiasm, may have succeeded in transferring the odium to the Christians as being in this respect far more intense than themselves.

That Nero did subject the believers of Jesus to great cruelty and that Paul, if not Peter, suffered martyrdom during his reign have been accepted beliefs from such early times and are so consistent with the otherwise well-known caprice and severity of Nero that there seems no reason to doubt the facts. The Neronian persecution may have been short and limited to Italy, but it was sharp and bloody. The reckless tyranny of Nero was supported by the voluptuousness and heartlessness of his age. The statements of the Apostle Paul in the first chapter of his Epistle to the Romans are not too strong concerning the gross immorality of society. Stoicism promulgated, in-

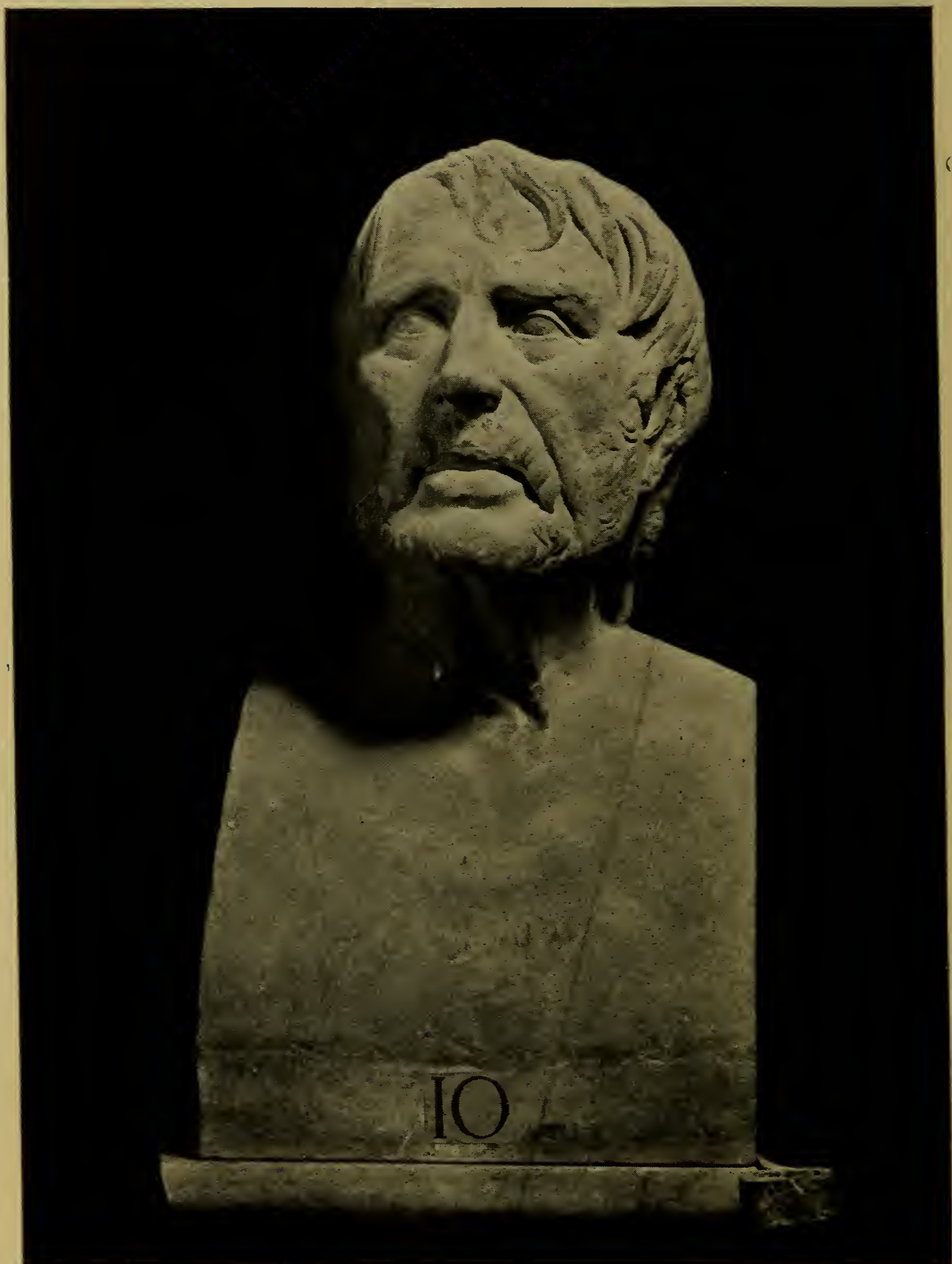
deed, some noble ideals and may even have been stimulated to do its best by the challenges of Christianity, but the body politic was corrupt throughout.

After the great fire Nero addressed himself with zeal to the rebuilding of Rome. He had a pride in making his capital splendid and especially in erecting for himself his famous palace called "the Golden House." This seems to have been a connection and combination, by means of arches and porticos, of the palaces on the Palatine with others on the Esquiline. In these buildings, which required several acres, he followed the Greek models of architecture and ornament. A conspicuous feature among them was his own colossal statue set up near what is now called, from it, the Colosseum. To defray the expense of these and other buildings he exacted or confiscated the wealth of other men and even stole with impious cupidity some of the rich gifts which had been placed in the temples. The growing discontent and opposition to him, therefore, became more manifest among the nobility. Conspiracies were formed against him. Some of these he was able to put down; but others sprang up in their places. Sometimes, alarmed by them, he drowned his fears in a flood of popular flattery gained by his undignified performances in the circus and the theater both at home and abroad. When his wife Poppæa died, some asserted that it was a consequence of his own brutal treatment. One great

man after another, some of them honored by historians as almost personifications of virtue, lost their lives by poison or by the sword, by assassination or by compelled suicide, as victims to his jealousy or his covetousness.

Even Seneca, the philosophic instructor of Nero's youth, had fallen under his imperial pupil's displeasure. Nero had no use for Seneca's moral precepts and felt that he was no longer helpful to him in the affairs of State. They were also sharers in too many guilty secrets for Nero to care for his presence. An attempt was made to involve him in a charge of treason brought, with truth, against Calpurnius and others. This charge was not proved against Seneca, but it was made the most of at court. Not long after this the Prefect Burrus died, and his successor, Tigellinus, was no friend of Seneca. He inflamed the emperor's covetousness for Seneca's enormous wealth, which then, he said, was throwing into the shade the splendor of the imperial household. He also represented Seneca as a rival to him in poetry and eloquence. All these arguments prevailed with a heart already full of hatred.

So an order was sent to Seneca that he must die. It was received without alarm. As time was refused him wherein to remake his will, he said to the friends around him that he would bequeath to them the example of his life. He checked their tears and asked them where were their precepts of philosophy and the fortitude that their studies



SENECA

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should have taught them? Did they not know the cruelty of Nero? Was it not to be expected that he would make an end of his master and tutor after murdering his mother and his brother? He begged his wife Paulina not to enter upon an endless sorrow. The veins of his limbs were then opened that he might bleed to death, a process that had to be accelerated by a vapor bath. During his lingering distress he conversed with those attending him. When Seneca passed away, Nero, though feeling a grim satisfaction, had really lost the best counselor he ever had.

In many of his writings, this great philosopher rose to a lofty height of ethical insight and discrimination. He seems to have been truly anxious to raise the moral tone of society. No man up to his time had apprehended more clearly than did he that moral light with which God is ready to light every man that cometh into the world. No man wrote better of sincerity, courage, contentment, justice, kindness to others even to the weakest slave, mercy to the wicked, the beauty of unselfishness, and the mind's possible superiority to its environment. He was a great expounder of natural religion as studied by his observation and by his conscience. Here, for example are a few of his maxims:

If we wish to be just judges of all things, let us first persuade ourselves of this: that there is not one of us without fault.

We shall be wise if we desire but little.

If each man takes account of himself and measures his own

body he will know how little it can contain and for how short a time.

Man is born for mutual assistance. You must live for another if you wish to live for yourself.

We are members of one great body.—Let him who hath conferred a favor hold his tongue about it.

Man's best gifts lie beyond the power of man either to give or to take away. The Universe, the grandest and loveliest work of nature, and the intellect, which was created to observe and admire, are our special and eternal possessions.

Such examples might be culled in great numbers from his writings. He seems at times to have been an earnest seeker after God. He declared that God did not dwell in temples made of wood and stone; that He did not delight in the blood of victims; that He is near to all His creatures; that men must believe in Him before they can approach Him, and that the truest service for Him is to be like unto Him. Some of his sayings approach the lofty precepts of Christ and His apostles. He is frequently quoted with approbation by early Christian writers. Yet his precepts differ from the Scriptural teachings in the fact that some of them are merely rhetorical and superficial. Others are fragmentary and inadequate. They are not winnowed from all chaff. At their highest level also they simply emphasize the demands of the moral law without offering to man any help for attaining to holiness other than what his own heroic decision may furnish. In their searching quality some of them are of a type so Pauline that many have thought that he and Paul, his contemporary, must have been well acquainted.

There is said to have been a tradition to that effect as early as the fourth century. Indeed, some early Christian thought he was doing a good service to write a book that he called "Conversations between Seneca and Paul." Its spuriousness is now generally admitted. But we naturally ask: Is it likely that Seneca knew anything of Paul?

On one hand, we may answer on general principles that a man in the high position of Seneca would not be likely to come into contact with despised and persecuted people, such as the Jews (and especially the Christians) then were. Most stoics would rather repel such company superciliously. On the other hand, we know that Paul had been tried in Corinth by Marcus Annæus Gallio, Seneca's brother, and that at Paul's arrival at Rome he was put under the charge of Burrus, the prefect of the Prætorian Guard, who was Seneca's friend. It is possible that through one of these, especially the latter, the philosopher may have heard of the apostle and in the course of his philosophic inquiries may have gone to hear him in disguise or listened to reports of his preaching, which was causing a stir among the Jews. He may thus have used ideas the source of which he would not deign to acknowledge. Whether this was true or not, it is probable that Paul and Peter were before long much respected by some members of the Annæan family to which Seneca belonged. Lanciani tells us that in 1867

an inscription was found in a tomb at Ostia such as is here reproduced.

While it is clearly a pagan inscription, shown by the invocation letters D . M (Diis Manibus,—to the gods of the lower regions,—) Marcus Annæus, the father, who placed the inscription, seems to have been named for Paul, and the Marcus Annæus, the "dearest son," whom it commemorates, to have been named for both Paul and Peter. The occurrence of the two names together make it altogether probable that both these apostles had been held in great honor by this particular household, and that a suggestion of a friendship with Christians is not wholly arbitrary.

D . M
M. ANNÆO
PAULO . PETRO
M. ANNÆUS . PAULUS
FILIO . CARISSIMO

Seneca was one of the greatest of the Stoics. "The Stoical philosophy," says Frederick Farrar, "may be compared to a torch, which flings a faint gleam here and there in the dusky recesses of a mighty cavern, while Christianity may be compared to the sun, pouring into the inmost depths

of the same cavern its sevenfold illumination. The torch had a value and a brightness of its own; but, compared to the dawning of that new glory, it appears to be dim and ineffectual, even though its brightness was a real brightness and had been drawn from the same ethereal source.'' Concerning the close of life, Seneca wrote to Lucilius:

> I am preparing myself for that day on which, laying aside all artifice or subterfuge, I shall be able to judge respecting myself whether I really speak or merely feel as a brave man should: whether all these words of haughty obstinacy which I have hurled against fortune were mere pretense and pantomime. What you have really achieved will then be manifest when your end is near.

Alas! the trouble with Seneca was that which puts all the great moral philosophers so far below Christ and even his apostles, namely, that he so failed to live up to the precepts that he wrote. It was when he descended from the plane of theory and sentiment to that of practice in daily life that he often ignobly failed.

No complete biography of him has come down to us. The curtain rises and falls over separated scenes in his life. But we know enough to mark his strange inconsistencies. His temporizing management of his imperial pupil, his accumulation of great wealth while he was extolling poverty, his mingling among the extravagancies and corruptions of the imperial court, his apparent failure to express any condemnation of the mur-

ders of Britannicus and Agrippina, and his apology for the latter of these horrors, which he wrote for Nero, are enough to be mentioned. It must be admitted that he had a very hard place to fill as an adviser of the emperor, and was often, doubtless, sorely perplexed to know what course of action would be best for the public welfare, but he cannot be acquitted of consent to some of Nero's crimes.

It was from the Roman army at last that retribution came to the cruel tyrant. He had become uneasy at the murmurs and the gloom that had manifestly increased among the people at his capital. He went for relief to his rural resorts in Campania. Reports of discontent there came to him from the provinces. The army camps contained many who were brooding over wrongs he had done them and were waiting for their revenge.

Among the prominent military men of the day was Servius Sulpicius Galba, who had for some years ruled under the imperial government over a portion of Spain. Descended from an honored family, this man had also achieved for himself renown and was popular with the soldiers. He was, therefore, an object of jealousy to Nero, though he was seventy-three years of age. While Nero was absent from Italy, making exhibitions of himself in public theaters and circuses, in Greece, Galba received some overtures from Caius Julius Vindex, a Roman general in Gaul, who hated Nero for some of his exactions. Vindex

felt that there was no chance for himself to be the successor of Nero, but he fixed his eyes on Galba as a possible chief. Galba hesitated to lead a revolution. Meanwhile the plottings of Vindex were discovered and that officer committed suicide.

Galba then felt that he must be more than ever an object of hatred to Nero's cruelty, and that he might as well proceed in an attempt to restore prosperity to the empire. He harangued the soldiers. They saluted him as emperor, but he would not as yet receive any title but that of Legate of the Senate and Roman people. He, however, enlisted more young men and prepared for a campaign. When the Roman general, Virginius Rufus of lower Germany, entered into communication with him, the news spread far and wide that Nero's fall was sure. Otho, Nero's former companion, from his distant station on the shore of the Atlantic, sent messages of cheer to Galba. Roman legions in other parts of the world also respectively hailed their own chiefs as emperor. The empire seemed to be breaking up into pieces.

When Nero's attention was first called to the handwriting on the wall, as it were, he treated it with contempt and expressed satisfaction at the prospect of confiscating to his own uses the estates of these traitors. He lingered for a while, ridiculously seeking applause for himself by his participation in public entertainments at Naples. After he returned to Rome he dedicated a temple to Poppæa. But he spent much time in trifles, play-

ing and singing and driving the chariot in the circus. When courier after courier dashed into Rome bringing tidings of the rebellion of this or that province, he summoned troops from Illyricum and brought sailors from the fleet at Ostia to defend the city. He threatened to recall the foreign magistrates and disgrace them. He called upon the populace, whom he had pampered, to rise in his behalf or he would let loose his lions upon them. He declared he would massacre those Senators who would not stand by him. Finally, he said he would meet the approaching revolutionists unarmed, trusting to his beauty, his tears, and his persuasive voice. Meanwhile the truly patriotic were happy in the increasing expectation of some deliverance from his yoke.

He had reached Rome in February. By June his cause was hopeless. Galba, it is true, with his forces, had not arrived. But the Prætorian Guard had been turned against him by their prefect, Nymphidius, to whom the camp had been given up by Tigillinus. When told that his last hope of assistance had deceived him, Nero started up from his couch at supper in his Golden House, dashed his choicest cups, which he had been using, to the ground, borrowed a vial of poison and went out to walk restlessly in the neighboring gardens. Afterward he conjured some of the military officers to join him in flight. They all either found excuses or openly refused. Then one, bolder than the rest, said to him:

NOMENTANA BRIDGE

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"Is it then so hard to die?"

He would have gone and thrown himself into the Tiber. One of his freedmen, named Phaon, offered his villa as a refuge. It was about four miles from Rome. It is easily identified still, situated between the Via Salaria and the Via Nomentana. For this he started, wearing a rough dress and barefoot and with a mantle of coarse material about his shoulders and face. In this disguise he was mounted on a horse and was accompanied by four friends, Phaon, Epaphroditus (who was another wealthy freedman, the secretary or librarian of Nero), Sporus, and one more whose name is not given. He passed through the city gate at early dawn, not far from the Prætorian camp. Some accounts declare that he could hear soldiers cursing his name and declaring that Galba would be his successor. It is said that thunder and lightning and the shock of earthquake added to the excitement of the hour, while the sky was draped with heavy black clouds. They met some people hurrying into the city. One asked what news there might be from the palace.

Before crossing the Nomentana bridge, over the Anio, a bridge that is still standing, Nero's horse shied, frightened at a dead man lying by the roadside. This caused the emperor's disguise to slip aside for a moment, so that a messenger from the Prætorian camp, passing just then, recognized his face. Near the fourth milestone they turned aside and followed a path through a canebrake

along the edge of a ditch, now called the Fosso della Cecchina. This brought them to the rear of Phaon's villa, for they had not approached the main entrance that they might escape observation. A hole had to be made in the back wall of the house. When it was completed, they crept through it into a bath-room, where Nero threw himself upon a pallet. His comrades urged him at once to escape by suicide from the indignities which would be heaped upon him by his foes as soon as he was captured. Presently word was brought to him that the Senate had decreed his death as an enemy to Rome. Terrified at this Nero took two daggers from his bosom, and with many grimaces tried their edges, one after another, and then laid them down, saying that the moment for him to use them had not yet come. Then he implored some one to set him the example of suicide. He reproached himself for his timidity.

"Fie, fie, Nero!" he cried, "Courage, man; come!"

Hearing then the sound of horsemen sent to seize him alive, he placed a weapon to his throat and his freedman Epaphroditus drove it home. This was on the ninth of June, in the 14th year of his reign and when he was at the age of thirty years and six months.

He was the last of the Julian family. Though few were disposed to weep at his departure and though multitudes throughout the empire felt relief when they heard of it, his body was not

refused a decent burial. By the consent of Icelus, representing Galba, the newly elected emperor, Ecloge and Alexandra, who had been the nurses of his childhood, with Acte, who had been a companion in his vices, and the three men who had accompanied him in his flight furnished the money for the cremation of his body, with suitable ceremonies.

The three women brought the ashes and placed them in the tomb of the Domitian family. This stood on a spur of the Pincian Hill, not far behind the present church of Santa Maria del Popolo, just inside the city gate and in the square of the same name. Lanciani speaks of the discovery (in a very recent year, on the exact spot of Nero's suicide) of the tomb of Claudia Ecloge, the old nurse who had been so devoted to the emperor when a child. The fields around the spot for hundreds of feet in every direction are said to have been strewn with the usual ruins of a villa of the first century and the finding of this simple slab is a most pathetic incident, in view of the details that we have described. Lord Byron says in "Don Juan":

> When Nero perished by the justest doom
>   Which ever the destroyer yet destroyed,
> Amidst the roar of liberated Rome,
>   Of nations freed and the world overjoyed,
> Some hands unseen strewed flowers upon his tomb,—
>   Perhaps the weakness of a heart not void
> Of feeling for some kindness done, when power
>   Had left the wretch an uncorrupted hour.

The stone slab on which is inscribed the simple epitaph of Ecloge is in the Capitoline Museum. Perhaps it was by her own request, in tender recollections of earlier days and also of her part in the preparations of his body for its cremation, that she was buried on the scene of her infamous nurseling's death.

There is an old tradition that the Church of Santa Maria del Popolo was founded by Pope Pascal II in the early part of the eleventh century on the site of the tombs of the Domitii and the burial place of Nero, because he would thus free the place from the demons that were supposed to haunt it. In the sixteenth century it was the Augustinian Convent (now suppressed) adjoining this church that was the lodging place of the monk Martin Luther on his visit to Rome. On his arrival he prostrated himself on the earth and exclaimed in the language of an old pilgrim hymn:

"I salute thee, O holy Rome, sacred with the blood of the martyrs."

Then he celebrated mass in the church. Before he departed from Rome,—having very different feelings from those with which he had entered it, and soon to become a great reformer,—he celebrated mass in this church again. It contains many grand old tombs and fine works of art. In the center of the square, between four spouting lions, rises the Egyptian obelisk, which the Emperor Augustus erected in B. C. 10, in the ancient Circus Maximus to commemorate the subjugation

of Egypt. Its hieroglyphic inscription is said to mention the names of Meneptah and Rameses III (1326 and 1273 B. C.).

Hawthorne in his "Marble Faun," that book which has become a very classic for its reproduction of modern Roman life and spirit, says:

> All Roman works and ruins, whether of the empire, the far-off Republic or the still more distant Kings, assume a transient, visionary and impalpable character when we think that this indestructible monument supplied one of the recollections which Moses and the Israelites bore from Egypt into the desert. Perchance on beholding the cloudy pillar and the fiery column they whispered awe-stricken to one another: "In its shape it is like that old obelisk which we and our fathers have so often seen on the borders of the Nile."

And now that very obelisk, with hardly a trace of decay upon it, is the first thing that the modern traveler sees after entering the Flaminian gate. Egyptian monarchs, Roman emperors, the leader of the Protestant Reformation:—what widely different historic names are conjured up for us by these adjacent memorials. Near the church the carriage driveway now leads up from terrace to terrace to the public garden on the Pincian Hill. Here the modern landscape artists have laid out a charming resort, reminding us of the ancient and luxurious gardens of Lucullus which stood near the same spot. Until 1840 this beautiful park had been for centuries a desolate waste; and here in the middle ages the ghost of Nero was believed to be forever wandering. On pleasant afternoons, and especially on Sunday afternoon,

many fine equipages may now be seen moving along its avenues, for it is the fashionable promenade of the Roman aristocracy, and from it a fine view over the city, taking in the dome of Saint Peter's, may be enjoyed. The military band discourses excellent music. The occupants of the carriages greet each other with bows and smiles. Pedestrians loiter and converse. In this strange old city, including so many strata of memories and so cosmopolitan in its society, modern gayeties and venerable antiquities jostle one another. In the midst of the living and festive throng one's mind can rove back through history and think of this and that famous event, significant or tragic and widely separated in time, which have occurred upon the ground over which he is passing.

POSTSCRIPT

In these brief reviews, which we have now made of the careers of the five great Cæsars of the New Testament period, we have caught many impressions of the dark character of that world into which Christ came and in which His kingdom had to make its first spiritual conquests. It was an age of vast wealth and power, but these were concentrated in the hands of a few. Enormous sums were spent on ostentatious displays, on epicurean feasts, and on sumptuous couches. The great masses of men were poor and ignorant indeed. Selfish luxury and extravagance mocked at abject beggary and despair. Multitudes were always on the verge of starvation. Little children were frequently exposed to die. It was an age of cynical unbelief as to the great verities of God and the soul, and at the same time one of trifling and absurd superstition. Philosophical groping after truth was accompanied by deep sadness. Dissipation found its penalty in cloyed disgust. Suicide was not only frequent but approved by some of the great teachers. Cold cruelty was the minister to unbridled ambition. It was a time of sanguinary combats in the arena and of widespread slavery. The old Roman virtues of the stern and

faithful type had largely expired. Never was there an age in which all forms of vice displayed more openly their methods and their achievements. As men became more polished in artistic culture they seemed to become more vile in personal conduct. The poet Horace said:

> The age of our fathers, worse than that of our grandsires, has produced us, who are yet baser and who are doomed to give birth to a still more degraded offspring.

Seneca wrote:

> All things are full of iniquity and vice; more crime is committed than can be remedied by restraint. We struggle in a huge contest of criminality. Daily the passion for sin is greater. The shame in committing it is less.

From these quotations, and many others that might be collected, we see that society in Rome at that time presented a picture at once repellent and most pathetic. It had developed enormous moral and spiritual needs, which no human wisdom nor power could satisfy. It was weary and heavy laden, and was sighing for rest. Yet the day was at hand.

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